

DURATION, TEMPORALITY, AND FREEDOM: SELF-CREATION IN  
BERGSON AND SARTRE

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **DURATION, TEMPORALITY, AND FREEDOM: SELF-CREATION IN BERGSON AND SARTRE**

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**M.A., The Department of Philosophy**

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This study aims to explore how freedom should be understood in terms of spontaneity from the perspectives of philosophy of life and phenomenology. In this context, it concentrates on Bergson's and Sartre's notions of freedom in relation to their qualitative understanding of time which stands for a central motif in their philosophy. Beyond the theories of determinism and free will that discuss freedom under the conception of time as successive series of 'nows', freedom implies the self-creative activity of life as in Bergson, and the constitution of oneself in the world on the basis of a fundamental choice as in Sartre. On the one hand, Sartre asserts the original temporality assuming the ontological structure of being-for-itself, on the other hand, Bergson highlights the essential difference between duration and spatial time. In order to explicate these key remarks, this thesis scrutinizes the notions of consciousness and self in both philosophies. Furthermore, it discusses Sartre's critique of Bergson on duration to disclose how Sartre transforms Bergson's idea of freedom from the existentialist point of view.

**Keywords:** Freedom, Time, Bergson, Sartre, Self-creation.

## ÖZ

### SÜRE, ZAMANSALLIK VE ÖZGÜRLÜK: BERGSON VE SARTRE'DA KENDİNİ YARATMA

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Bu çalışma, özgürlüğün kendiliğinden olması bakımından nasıl anlaşılması gerektiğini yaşam felsefesi ve fenomenolojinin bakış açılarından keşfetmeyi hedefler. Bu bağlamda, onların niteliksel zaman anlayışları ile bağıntılı olarak, Bergson ve Sartre'da özgürlük nosyonuna odaklanır. Özgürlüğü birbiri ardına gelen şimdilerin dizini olan zaman anlayışı altında tartışan belirlenimcilik ve özgür irade teorilerinin ötesinde, Bergson'da özgürlük, yaşamın kendini yaratıcı faaliyetine; Sartre'da ise, esas seçim temelinde kişinin kendini belirlemesine işaret eder. Sartre, kendi-için-olan varlığın ontolojik yapısını dikkate alarak ilkel (orijinal) zamansallığı ileri sürer. Öte yandan Bergson, süre ile uzamsal zaman arasındaki farkı vurgular. Bu önemli noktaları açıklamak için bu tez, iki felsefede de bilinç ve kendilik kavramlarını inceler. Ayrıca, Sartre'ın, Bergson'cu özgürlüğü varoluşçu bakış açısından nasıl dönüştürdüğünü ortaya çıkarmak için onun süre kavramı üzerindeki eleştirisini tartışır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Özgürlük, Zaman, Bergson, Sartre, Kendini Yaratma.

*To my mother, my soul mate, and my animal friends*

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In Bergson's philosophy of life, we encounter investigation of freedom based on the qualitative notion of time. Apart from the traditional debate between determinism and free will, he takes a radical approach to the question of freedom by privileging concrete life experiences. At the core of his attitude lies the rejection of the principle of causality which arises out of the scientific understanding of time consisting of discrete sequences that fundamentally communicate with each other in a causal relation. In that regard, as Bergson argues, this conception of time, which includes quantification and measurement, corresponds to a homogeneous time derived from space in which the elements are juxtaposed. Accordingly, Bergson admits that the true character of freedom that points beyond the issue of free or non-free choice cannot be demonstrated when we try to bring a solution to the problem of freedom over the spatial understanding of time. In this context, for him, the nature of freedom can be disclosed on the basis of qualitative time describing non-objectified and non-conceptualized real time which occurs in the flow of life. For this reason, Bergson separates duration from spatial time and along with the idea of the self, he places this distinction at the core of his attempt to explain the meaning of freedom in life.

As one of the leading figures of the 20th century, Bergson's emphasis on duration became influential in Sartre's inquiry of freedom regarding human's concrete contact with the world. In contrast to scientific considerations which take into account quantification and universalization in their methodology by attributing to the world its mechanical character, Sartre, like Bergson, gives weight to uniqueness and singularity by focusing on the qualitative aspects of human existence prior to any scientific or theoretical outlook. In that regard, he specifies the original time, that is, temporality to reveal the existential sense of absolute freedom. In accord with

Bergson's philosophy, Sartre's notion of freedom assumes original temporality in which the self realizes itself within the heterogeneous integrity of three dimensions of time. However, unlike Bergson's interpretation of freedom in a dynamic power of life, Sartre sees freedom as a root of ekstasic existence of consciousness through which the 'I' and the world are constituted. More precisely, in Sartre's account, under the temporalizing power of consciousness, freedom is established in the world. In this regard, by determining the structure of the being-in-the-world, Sartre's phenomenological ontology serves as a ground of absolute freedom which gains its meaning from primordial time, that is, original pure temporality.

Accordingly, in this study, based on a comparative reading of Bergson and Sartre, my aim is to explore the spontaneity of freedom understood from the perspectives of philosophy of life and phenomenology. To this extent, I will concentrate on Bergson's and Sartre's approaches to disclose the spontaneous character of freedom which is founded on the refusal of the traditional problem of causality and free will. They significantly state that we inevitably fall into the sphere of determinism when we consider freedom as a free decision on alternative ways or as a free choice accomplished by the subject among the pre-given possibilities. For them, these hypotheses require the quantitative conception of time which refers to the derivative scientific understanding of time. However, they insist that freedom does not reside in free will, but rather, by stemming from the original time, it presents itself as a creative act in which the self chooses itself, so that, creates and constitutes itself in life and the world.

In this light, by making self-creation the central motif of this thesis, I will introduce a comparison between Bergson's and Sartre's accounts in order to capture different horizons opened by the philosophy of life and existential phenomenology. On the one hand, for Bergson, freedom implies the dynamic creation of self in the evolutionary continuous flow of life. On the other hand, for Sartre, freedom means a break of self from the continuity to constitute itself in a correlation with its world. Moreover, Bergson maintains degrees of freedom resulting from his distinction between deeper self and superficial self that is grounded on the essential difference

between heterogeneous time (duration) and homogeneous time (spatial representation). He remarks that free act originates from the deeper self which lives in pure duration in contrast to the superficial self which is subject to the measurable time under its social and practical orientations. The act becomes free when it springs from a dynamic inner process of the whole soul isolated from the mechanical world which consists of external relations. Nonetheless, according to Sartre, it is irrational to assert degrees in freedom because freedom gains its absolute character from the primordial human time that assumes nothingness of consciousness and its surpassing power in temporalizing itself as a whole. The ontological structure of being-for-itself plays a crucial role in Sartre's emphasis on the linkage between temporality and absolute freedom. For him, original temporality occurs in the nihilating activity of being-for-itself that refuses to exist in instantaneity as a static being. In this context, freedom expresses self-determination by transcending the world toward one's own possibilities. By virtue of this fundamental nihilating activity of consciousness, the self constitutes itself and its world within its fundamental project. From these perspectives, this thesis will scrutinize the notions of time, consciousness, and selfhood in Bergson's and Sartre's philosophies to highlight their crucial role in freedom, that is, self-creation (self-determination). Furthermore, I will elaborate on Sartre's critique of Bergson's notion of duration to stress the connection between qualitative time and the existential sense of freedom in a more comprehensive way. For this purpose, I will primarily concentrate on Bergson's *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, and *Creative Evolution*. In addition, along with his early work *The Transcendence of the Ego: A Sketch for a Phenomenological Description*, I will dwell on Sartre's *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology* and *Existentialism is a Humanism* to effectively demonstrate the existential implications of phenomenological ontology.

In this framework, by elaborating on the difference of duration (*la durée*) from objectified spatial time, in chapter 2, I will introduce Bergson's philosophy of time. Here, my purpose is to explain the crucial points and dualities underlying his notion

of duration. In order to illustrate the heterogeneity of duration as distinct from the homogeneity of space, Bergson develops the theory of multiplicities. According to him, as opposed to the material objects that belong to the quantitative multiplicity due to their measurability through their projection into space, our psychic states pertain to the qualitative multiplicity in which the elements are intertwined and change in their qualities. Here, Bergson signifies that qualitative multiplicity refers to pure duration since it includes interpenetrated mental contents that cannot be positioned in a line in space, thus, cannot be decomposed and counted. Along with the distinction he sets forth between two kinds of multiplicities, Bergson presents us the feature of duration while defining the concepts of heterogeneity and homogeneity. In this direction, this chapter will attentively analyze what Bergson means by the notion of duration reflecting the immediate experience since it is directly related to his thought of freedom which will be investigated in the next chapter. Furthermore, it will point to Bergson's association of duration with consciousness in order to show its import in the context of Sartre's critique of Bergson.

In the third chapter, in line with duration, I will attempt to draw the portrait of the idea of self and its linkage with freedom in Bergson's philosophy of life to argue in what sense freedom reveals itself as self-creation in its spontaneity. To this end, firstly, I will illuminate Bergson's approach that separates the deeper self (fundamental self) from the superficial self (spatial version of deeper self). In *Time and Free Will*, he mainly states that in contrast to the spatial conceptualization that assumes causal determinations and superficial self, the deeper self arises within a continuous flow of consciousness occurring in a pure heterogeneous time. Here, Bergson tries to indicate that, by being subject to the spatial time (objectified time), the superficial self interacts with the mechanical world for its social and practical requirements whereas the deeper self, by living in pure duration, belongs to dynamic inner life which is independent of the spatial and conceptual external world. Secondly, to emphasize the relationship Bergson establishes between the two aspects of the self, I will stress his arguments on the principle of causality, contingency, and

prediction by demonstrating their impact on the discussion of free will and determinism. He notably examines the physical and psychological determinism in their inconsistency with the notion of duration in order to disclose the prominent role of duration in his theory of freedom. Finally, I will elucidate how Bergson affirms the origin of the free act to posit freedom as self-creation in contrast to the attitudes of the opponents or defenders of free will based on a homogeneous time. Furthermore, I will concentrate on Bergson's theory of evolution to demonstrate the fact that evolution as duration signifies the creativity of life, therefore, specifies freedom as a power of creation.

After introducing Bergson's philosophy of life, the leading purpose of the fourth chapter is to elaborate on Sartre's phenomenological ontology to shed light on the ground of his concept of absolute freedom. In the beginning, by bringing the concept of intentionality to the fore, I will clarify the structure of being-for-itself which constitutes the core of Sartre's ontology and existentialism that leads to a radical freedom in terms of self-determination. In *Being and Nothingness*, he basically claims that being-for-itself is the being of consciousness in the sense that consciousness's existential ground is always to be for-itself. In every act of intending towards the object, consciousness separates itself from being-in-itself. With this separation, being-for-itself gains its existence and the world is disclosed in and through nihilation. Therefore, for Sartre, transcending which comes through nihilation, that is, bringing negation into the being is the constitutive quality of being-for-itself. In this regard, along with the significance of intentionality and transcendence, I will attempt to explain the status of the ego in Sartre's ontology. Since he describes consciousness as having a lack of content, he remarks that the self or ego is not immanent to consciousness. As he argues in *Transcendence of the Ego*, the ego is constructed by consciousness in the sense that consciousness autonomously unifies itself employing its own spontaneity. In this case, for Sartre, the 'I' and the world correlatively arise together in experience. Indeed, this issue stands for one of the specific points where Sartre criticizes Bergson and it will be a crucial matter in evaluating Sartre's notion of temporality on behalf of freedom in the

next chapter. Moreover, to signify Sartre's existentialism that is grounded on a phenomenological investigation, I will elaborate on his notion of being-for-Others. Since it is an ontological dimension of being-for-itself, I will argue that being-for-Others in Sartre explicates how consciousness finds itself in the midst of the world. By introducing Sartre's concrete examples, I will explain the role of the look of the Other in his philosophy in the contexts of responsibility and freedom.

Accordingly, in the fifth chapter, I will put forward how Sartre asserts original temporality in relation to freedom from the perspective of phenomenological ontology and existentialism. In this respect, firstly, after presenting the meaning of the past, the present, and the future in temporality as a whole, I will point to the difference between pure reflection and impure reflection to explore Sartre's criticism in and through analyzing the distinction between original temporality and psychic temporality. He associates Bergson's duration with the psychic temporality which comprises passive intimate cohesion that is not temporalizing itself. On this ground, he endorses that duration cannot form the ekstastic unity of being-for-itself because it does not involve a being which is its past and its future under the activity of separating itself from being-in-itself. Therefore, for Sartre, the reflection in duration can only be impure since it only considers intuition without introducing any ontological background. On the contrary, the purified reflection discloses the fundamental character of being-for-itself because in this mode the unity of the reflective and the reflected-on is the immanent unity of nihilation, that is, not being-in-itself. Hence, the self becomes present to all its ekstates in pure reflection so that in the manner of 'not-being-in-itself' it realizes itself as a project which is never accomplished. However, Sartre denotes that in impure reflection we are attached to the successions of the past, present, and future in which the affection of one another occurs from a distance to each other. Regarding this, since he conceives the pure reflection as a principle of his notion of temporality, secondly, I will demonstrate Sartre's existential approach to the issue of free will and psychological determinism through the relationship between nothingness, freedom, anguish, and the self as a

project. This will help to figure out the prominent role of temporality in Sartre's construction of freedom in terms of 'possibilization'.

In this light, to achieve the main objective of this study, which is to discuss the spontaneity of freedom in terms of self-creation (self-determination), thirdly, I will take a closer look at Bergson's notion of duration and Sartre's account of temporality. The reason behind this focus is to reveal the ways in which Bergson's notion of self-creation, which implies a return to life, transforms into Sartre's notion of self-determination that operates as disclosing the correlation between the world and the self. To this extent, by taking into account Bergson's theory of creative evolution and Sartre's consideration of the constitution of the self and its world, I will attempt to formulate what it means to exist in the flow of life and to be in the world under the theme of freedom. Although they both develop their philosophy against mechanical explanations by attaching importance to the primordial time, implications of their notions of freedom provide a way to understand the difference between the philosophy of life and existential phenomenology. In this respect, I will suggest that the world becomes a limiting concept in Bergson's retrieval of the creative power of inner life while it gains its meaning through self-constitution, that is, self-determination in Sartre's treatment.

## CHAPTER 2

### BERGSON ON TIME

Bergson's philosophy of life assumes the qualitative conception of time to elicit the immediate experience of life which precedes any theoretical or positivistic approach. In this endeavor, Bergson emphasizes the notion of duration to return the essence of life that is not covered by conceptuality and objectivity. In this framework, he describes duration as a pure lived time that is primordially given in experience in contrast to spatial time that is the product of the objectification of the intellect. By separating pure duration from its spatial representation, Bergson provides a way for the philosophical intuition of real time in its original purity prior to the derivative time which consists of measurable units that are reflected in space. Since this approach, which reveals the vital dimension, lays the ground for his view of freedom, this chapter will elucidate the role of duration in Bergson's insight that privileges the flow of life. In this respect, along with his ideas on two kinds of multiplicity, I will investigate what duration means for Bergson as distinct from spatial time and how he places consciousness in his notion of duration.

#### 2.1. The Theory of Multiplicities

In the second chapter of *Time and Free Will*, Bergson focuses on the structure of qualitative multiplicity that is different from quantitative multiplicity to indicate the heterogeneity of our inner states. He principally declares that our conscious states form the qualitative multiplicity in which the magnitude, therefore, quantification cannot be taken into account. Here, Bergson emphasizes the intensive character of the multiplicity of conscious states unmixed with spatiality. For him, as a general tendency, by ascribing spatiality to our mental states, we regard them as extended countable objects. In this way, we externalize the inner multiplicity to make it

measurable which refers to a property of material objects. With this attitude, according to Bergson, we objectify the mental states to isolate each of them from the confused multiplicity in which they reside, thus, we identify each of them as a separated element. In this context, Bergson admits that objectification of our states of consciousness requires a symbolical representation of space that allows for quantification. Since physical objects have a feature of extensity, we separately position them alongside each other in space in which we observe them without any symbolization. However, this cannot be so for the states of consciousness which have a different structure from material objects due to their intertwined nature:

The case is no longer the same when we consider purely affective psychic states, or even mental images other than those built up by means of sight and touch. Here, the terms being no longer given in space, it seems, *a priori*, that we can hardly count them except by some process of symbolical representation. In fact, we are well aware of a representation of this kind when we are dealing with sensations the cause of which is obviously situated in space. (Bergson, 2001, pp.85-86)

Regarding this, Bergson distinguishes qualitative multiplicity from quantitative multiplicity by taking counting as a criterion. In other words, he attempts to demonstrate that our inner reality which consists of the interpenetrated psychic states cannot be subject to quantification unless represented in space by the intellect. In this respect, he calls the multitude of material objects as a numerical multiplicity in which the measurable elements occupy positions in a homogeneous medium. In this homogeneity, things are distinct from one another and they could be set out in a line. It follows from the impenetrability and divisibility of material objects that we can separately localize and simultaneously think of them within the homogeneous medium, namely space.

To strengthen his argument on two kinds of multiplicity, Bergson analyzes the nature of the number which implies for him spatiality. He characterizes the number as a compilation of units that are considered equivalent to each other when counted. According to him, in order to perform the act of counting, we must accept these units as identical to each other by disregarding their authentic differences. That is to say,

counting requires a generalization in a sense in which the internal, that is, qualitative differences are ignored:

No doubt we can count the sheep in a flock and say that they are fifty, although they are all different from one another and are easily recognized with the shepherd: but the reason is that we agree in that case to neglect their individual differences and to take into account only what they have in common... Hence, we may conclude that the idea of number implies the simple intuition of a multiplicity of parts or units, which are absolutely alike. (Bergson, 2001, p.76)

When we start to count a group of students in the class, we describe each student as identical to the others to increase the number. By doing this, as Bergson emphasizes, we eliminate the intrinsic difference of each student from the other. Otherwise, we cannot add numbers together and state the sum of numbers. In this case, it can be articulated that the only difference between the students we count is the position they occupy in space. They must be lined up separately from each other to be counted. Accordingly, Bergson notices that the identical units must be distinct from each other to form the number. For him, this refers to the juxtaposition of them under a homogeneous intermediary. In the process of counting, each unit signifies a different point in space since “we involuntarily fix at a point in space each of the moments which we count, and it is only on this condition that the abstract units come to form a sum” (Bergson, 2001, p.79). In this attitude of fixation, as Bergson argues, the external objects which are subject to the process of counting are symbolized with abstract numbers in order to add the previous moment of counting to the next. In fact, symbolization allows for picturing in mind, and this becomes possible by attributing spatiality to the numbers. Thus, “every clear idea of number implies a visual image in space” (Bergson, 2001, p.79).

From this perspective, Bergson evaluates the multiplicity of material objects in terms of its relation to the concept of number. By focusing on counting, he leads to conclude that quantitative multiplicity immediately assumes the idea of number because of the fact that, similar to distinct units of the number, quantitative differences of physical objects are obtained utilizing juxtaposition of them in space. In this sense, he regards quantitative multiplicity as a numerical multiplicity to which

the notion of number, thus, counting is applicable. In this multitude, each element is isolated from its quality, therefore, only considered as a point in space. Hence, spatiality stands for the fundamental characteristics of quantitative multiplicity in the sense that entities are lined up in a series disconnected from each other. On the other hand, a qualitative multiplicity consists of the psychic states that permeate one another and blend. Because each psychic state transitions into another psychic state while maintaining its individuality, this multiplicity includes conscious states that change in their qualities. Here, Bergson claims that qualitative multiplicity inherits heterogeneity and temporality in itself. Since he ascribes non-spatiality to the states of consciousness, the qualitative multiplicity can be regarded as a whole of intertwined multitude having no definite boundaries between its elements. We cannot attribute the conception of the number to interpenetrated mental states because we cannot conceive them as distinct from each other. Thus, this confused multitude cannot be experienced with numbers given that it cannot be analyzed or understood in terms of quantitative explanations. Rather, it can only be grasped in duration through intuition:

In a word, pure duration might well be nothing but a succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another, without precise outlines, without any tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another, without any affiliation with number: it would be pure heterogeneity. (Bergson, 2001, p.104)

In this context, by focusing on the heterogeneous structure of psychic states, Bergson underlines the dynamic character of qualitative multiplicity which is strongly related to his notion of duration. In contrast to the static configuration of the external objects, there is continuity in our inner states manifested through qualitative changes. But, when states of consciousness that form the confused multitude are projected into space to symbolically represent them for the sake of practical purposes, they become discontinuous punctual instants, thus, their quality is reduced to quantity. Hence, Bergson argues that the true nature of our psychic states, which are intrinsically intertwined, is corrupted when they are represented in space because transforming them into discrete entities “is likely to influence these states themselves to give them

in reflective consciousness a new form, which immediate perception did not attribute to them” (Bergson, 2001, p.90).

In the immediate experience of our inner states, we can intuit pure duration in which our inner life dwells with its interpenetrative structure. However, our reflective consciousness quantifies this inner dynamism by being subject to spatial time as “we are compelled to borrow from space the images by which we describe what the reflective consciousness feels about time and even succession” (Bergson, 2001, p.91). Regarding this, starting from the difference he puts forward between qualitative and quantitative multiplicities, Bergson attempts to explain the nature of duration as distinct from objectified time which is constructed by the habit of intelligence. Before elaborating on this issue, Deleuze’s approach gives a clue to understand in what respect Bergson’s theory of multiplicity significantly asserts the notion of duration and its difference from physical time.

In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze pays attention to Bergson’s method of intuition to indicate its decisive role in Bergson’s philosophy of life which privileges duration. For him, unlike intellectualism that eventually posits differences in degree, intuition is a method that can figure out badly-stated problems since it discovers “differences in kind beneath the differences in degree, and conveys to the intelligence the criteria that enable it to distinguish between true and false problems” (Deleuze, 1991, p.21). Under the conception of spatial time, there is an impure composite of duration and extensity which can only be purified when it is “divided according to qualitative and qualified tendencies” (Deleuze, 1991, p.22). The distinguishing feature of intuition provides us to grasp the source of real experience, that is, the immediate experience of life in which there is no mixture of space and time. Therefore, for Deleuze, the method of intuition is required to be purged of the spatial compound and withdrawn into life in its purity. Accordingly, Deleuze interprets the distinction between quantitative and qualitative multiplicity in terms of actuality and virtuality. While quantitative differentiation refers to discontinuous and actual numerical multiplicity, qualitative discrimination is a continuous and virtual multiplicity that offers itself as temporal in pure duration. This is to say that “it moves from the virtual to its

actualization, it actualizes itself by creating lines of differentiation that correspond to its differences in kind (Deleuze, 1991, p.43)”. Therefore, this kind of multitude, for Deleuze, is uninterrupted, heterogeneous, and simple. In this regard, “Bergson does not have any real difficulty in reconciling heterogeneity and continuity (Deleuze, 1991, p.43)”. By considering pure duration in its virtual essence, he emphasizes its irreducibility into a numerical multitude in which there cannot be any ‘realization’ since each element has its full actualization. In other words, “number has only differences in degree, or that its differences, whether realized or not, are always actual in it” (Deleuze, 1991, p.41). In this light, he suggests that this characterization of duration plays a significant role in Bergson’s philosophy since the notion of virtual, which reveals the creative power of life, is developed by Bergson to resolve false problems, including freedom.

## **2.2. Measurable Time and Space**

In Bergson’s account, time can be conceived in two different ways: as a homogenous medium that provides a measurement for the sake of the practical aspect of life or as duration, that is, the real time immediately experienced within its flow independent of the external conditions and practical orientations. The first one corresponds to abstract measurable time effectuated by the symbolization of duration. He mainly declares that this understanding of time is derived from the conception of space as an empty homogeneous entity which comes from Kant’s formulation in the *Transcendental Aesthetics*. According to Kant, space is independent of its contents. Since it is the a priori form of intuition, it can be purely intuited regardless of its ingredients. It does not stand for a property of external objects. Yet, it is the necessary condition for the sensibility of the objects. In this respect, Bergson characterizes Kant’s notion of space as an empty surface in the sense that it can be separated from physical objects. Through this separation, space makes possible “to distinguish a number of identical and simultaneous sensations from one another” (Bergson, 2001, p.95). Therefore, it is a tenet of quantitative differentiation “other

than that of qualitative differentiation, and consequently, it is a reality with no quality” (Bergson, 2001, p.95).

In this context, to articulate the meaning of space being a homogeneous medium, Bergson signifies Kant’s consideration of space in terms of the a priori form of outer sense. For him, along with the integration of inextensive sensations, the extensity is composed by the active interference of mind in which sensations are synthesized. Without this synthesizing act of the mind, the sensations that are not extended would continue to be as they are:

For their co-existence to give rise to space, there must be an act of the mind which takes them in all at the same time and sets them in juxtaposition: this unique act is very like what Kant calls an a priori form of sensibility...If we now seek to characterize this act, we see that it consists essentially in the intuition, or rather the conception, of an empty homogeneous medium. (Bergson, 2001, pp. 94-95)

Here, what Bergson points out is that inextensive sensations become simultaneous through the active contribution of the mind which refers to the act of intelligence in his account. Homogeneity of space assumes simultaneity of sensations in the sense that all of them co-exist and leave no trace when they disappear. With this emphasis, Bergson asserts that intelligence, using the homogeneity of space resulting from its being an a priori form of intuition, equates all sensations in their qualities and attributes simultaneity to them. But, for him, in this act of juxtaposition, the intellect incorrectly accepts time also as homogenous and reduces it to space. “Now, if space is to be defined as the homogeneous, it seems that inversely every homogeneous and unbounded medium will be space” (Bergson, 2001, p.98). The inclination of the reduction of time to space, which means of quality to quantity, results from our intelligence which is “constructed in such a way as to be able to deal adequately with inert matter and to organize it according to the needs of life” (Kolakowski, 2001, p.16).

The conception of time as a homogeneous medium entails juxtaposition of psychic states in time similar to the physical objects lined up one after another in space. Thus, according to Bergson, under this spatial consideration, we abstract time from

duration just as we abstract space from its contents. However, although space as a homogeneous entity ensures the externality of material objects by positing boundaries between them, states of consciousness successively permeate one another without having external parts to each other. For this reason, all conscious states are fused, and as a result of this fusion, each state mirrors the whole soul. But, as Bergson expresses, penetrated conscious states become external to each other when time is considered under the shadow of space:

We may therefore surmise that time, conceived under the form of a homogeneous medium, is some spurious concept due to the trespassing of the idea of space upon the field of pure consciousness... If, then, one of these two supposed forms of the homogeneous, namely time and space, is derived from the other, we can surmise *a priori* that the idea of space is the fundamental datum. (Bergson, 2001, pp.98-99)

In this perspective, as mentioned above in the discussion of two kinds of multiplicity, Bergson argues that real time, which is not derived from space, is itself qualitative and heterogeneous in which no separation can be set up between the previous and present states of consciousness. Indeed, as Kolakowski agrees, prior to the objectification of time by making it spatial, “we perceive pure *duree* when we concentrate on our internal experience only, leaving aside the world of things among which we live, abandoning the practical orientation of the mind” (Kolakowski, 2001, p.16).

### **2.3. Time as Duration: The Immediate Experience of Life**

By comparing heterogeneous duration with the homogeneity, Bergson suggests that the concept of space shapes our idea of time because we consider the moments of time as if they are externally linked each other; “we express duration in terms of extensity, and succession thus takes the form of a continuous line or a chain, the parts of which touch without penetrating one another” (Bergson, 2001, p.101). However, pure duration belongs to inner life independent of spatial projection and it is the form “which succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself live,

when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states” (Bergson, 2001, p.100). Regarding this, Bergson wants to clarify that in real time, in which life is immediately experienced, the succession of our conscious states forms a whole not by separating from each other but by fusing each other. Hence, for Bergson, duration refers to endless continuous progress in which we can intuitively grasp the expansion of the past towards the future since “it forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune melting, so to speak, into one another” (Bergson, 2001, p.100).

To illustrate the organic nature of the temporality of life (the structure of duration), Bergson establishes an analogy of a melody. Just as the notes come together in harmony in a musical melody, the past, present and future form a whole in life. This analogy also helps to understand what Bergson means with succession as opposed to simultaneity. In the harmonic unity, even if the notes of the melody succeed one another, we sense each of them in the other, therefore, in the whole. Here, Bergson wants to demonstrate that succession is necessary so that, by retaining itself, each note of tune penetrates to the next and reflects the whole. Accordingly, if we think of duration as a melody, we can grasp that it is a concrete organic totality in which the modes of time melt into one another through an uninterrupted succession. If a note is played too long or too short, we immediately notice this change in the rhythm of the melody. Hence, we realize that this disruption in the flow of the rhythm causes a qualitative change in the whole musical melody:

We can thus conceive of succession without distinction, and think of it as a mutual penetration, an interconnexion and organization of elements, each one of which represents the whole, and cannot be distinguished or isolated from it except by abstract thought. Such is the account of duration which would be given by a being who was ever the same and ever changing, and who had no idea of space. (Bergson, 2001, p.101)

In this context, for Bergson, when we include space in our perception of pure succession, we represent succession within extensity, thus, we perceive our states of consciousness as points one after another. In this way, by bringing simultaneity into the internal organization of duration, we cut off pure succession from the harmony of

duration which consists of interpenetrated states of mind. As Bergson signifies, the internal states and modes of time perceived in simultaneity are disconnected from each other and cannot enter into a harmonic relationship with each other so that the previous state does not persist in the next state after affecting it. This means introducing the static structure of space to the successive moments of pure duration to form a discontinuous countable multiplicity with similarity to number. What comes out of this is homogeneous time, “the time that can be counted, fragments the indivisible dynamism of *durée*, and leads us to think that time is, like the line, already a finished product, that it is complete” (Barnard, 2011, p.29). Nevertheless, duration is always uncompleted and in the process of becoming to the extent that it includes the dynamism of life. There is a flow in duration as the moments of duration are added dynamically to each other and they compose themselves “like the successive notes of a tune by which we allow ourselves to be lulled and soothed” (Bergson, 2001, p.104).

It is difficult for us to imagine this flux of duration because of the fact that, in our daily life, we take cognizance of time from the perspective of external objects which appear in a homogeneous medium. When time is portrayed in this way, moments and even movements seem to be in an external relationship to each other, like bodies in space. When I observe the movement of a hand by looking at the clock, I do not measure duration in its own flux, rather I exclusively count simultaneous moments of the objectified time. Apart from me, there is no transition of the hand from one situation to the other. In fact, in space, there is only one position of the hand where the past situation leaves no trace. But, in my inner life purified from space, there is an ongoing flow of interfused conscious states. In that regard, Barnard specifies duration as a genuine interfusion in which “the efflorescence of ceaseless novelty and inner continuity that is our consciousness is not pulverized into units of sameness, each counted and accounted for” (Barnard, 2011, p.28). In this sense, Bergson expresses the difference of real time from space as follows:

Thus, within our ego, there is succession without mutual externality; outside the ego, in pure space, mutual externality without succession: mutual

externality, since the present oscillation is radically distinct from the previous oscillation, which no longer exists; but no succession since succession exists solely for a conscious spectator who keeps the past in mind and sets the two oscillations or their symbols side by side in an auxiliary space. (Bergson, 2001, pp.108-109)

Therefore, in Bergson's view, duration refers to a pre-objectified time in the sense that it is intrinsically linked with the flow of life. Here, Bergson argues that we can grasp this flow when we concentrate on our inner life independent of the external world which comes to the scene with the notion of space. Life manifests its inner dynamism in duration. However, when we count the moments of time, by transforming pure succession into simultaneity, we break this internal organization and reflect it in space. Through this reflection, although each moment of duration is heterogeneously connected to the others, it "can be brought into relation with a state of the external world which is contemporaneous with it, and can be separated from the other moments in consequence of this very process" (Bergson, 2001, p.110). In this process, duration, by being subject to the conditions of the outside world, becomes objective time and loses its vitality that can be immediately experienced. Thus, it "assumes the illusory form of a homogeneous medium" (Bergson, 2001, p.110).

Accordingly, Bergson elucidates the concept of motion in order to clarify the confusion of duration with space, that is, simultaneity. He principally declares that when we attribute homogeneity and divisibility to motion, we instantly think of the movement as occurring in space. In other words, when we consider the movement of the object over the points it passes, we quantify the motion, hence, reduce it to space. Indeed, the successive locations of the moving object, like the links of a chain, cause us to posit this movement in space because for each location we fix a point in space. However, according to Bergson, the transition from one point to another is a space-free process that takes place in duration and "which has no reality except for a conscious spectator" (Bergson, 2001, p.11). That is to say, in space, there are only positions of the moving object which correspond to different points. But, in order to characterize the movement of the object as progress, we need to be aware of the

passages between these points. This awareness, for Bergson, refers to a mental synthesis in which the connection between locations is necessarily formed. Through the act of synthesis, keeping in mind the positions that succeed each other, consciousness grasps the non-extended (psychic) process, that is, continuity rather than perceiving positions in a homogeneous medium:

We are thus compelled to admit that we have here to do with a synthesis which is, so to speak, qualitative, a gradual organization of our successive sensations, a unity resembling that of a phrase in a melody. This is just the idea of motion which we form when we think of it by itself, when, so to speak, from motion we abstract mobility. (Bergson, 2001, p.111)

Furthermore, to signify that movement and duration are in fact a continuous change along with pure succession, Bergson emphasizes the fallacy of the paradox of Achilles and the tortoise. In this respect, he argues that Zeno's argument arises from the traditional confusion of motion with space. For him, the reason behind this misconception is spotting the series of moves with the homogeneous space in which the gap between two points can be infinitely divisible. But, according to Bergson, Achilles' each step is an indivisible move and after a certain number of these moves, Achilles overtakes the tortoise:

Because each of Achilles' steps and each of the tortoise's steps are indivisible acts in so far as they are movements, and are different magnitudes in so far as they are space: so that addition will soon give a greater length for the space traversed by Achilles that is obtained by adding together the space traversed by the tortoise. (Bergson, 2001, p.113)

Here, Bergson states that the paradox becomes meaningless when we get rid of identifying Achilles' movement with a series of discontinuous progress from one point of space to the next. This identification, in Bergson's account, refers to the reduction of the movement to the space traversed. But the movement cannot be separated from its actor in the sense that each move of Achilles and tortoise is irreducibly individualized by its unique action. As Mullarkey clarifies, by individuation what Bergson means is that "we cannot reduce one type of movement – the tortoise's – to its supposed atomic layer and then rebuild Achilles' movement with these atoms" (Mullarkey, 2000, p.28). Therefore, for Bergson, the movement in

its essence is not discontinuous or set aside. It is a constant change that occurs in duration. When it is abstracted from its actor and symbolized in terms of space, it becomes quantified and divided. Hence, looking at the motion from outside, by making it spatial, prevents us to see its inner dynamism. Actually, according to Bergson, the movement in itself is a process involved in duration and it cannot be isolated from the flux of duration.

In this light, by eliminating spatial composition from motion, Bergson proceeds to reveal the continuity which takes place in the heterogeneous structure of duration. For him, the intervals of duration only exist for consciousness which can sense the continuity through the mental synthesis. Given this, apart from the static quantitative character of space and homogeneous time, consciousness grasps the internal qualitative change which occurs in the moments of duration:

Duration and motion are mental syntheses, and not objects; that, although the moving body occupies, one after the other, points on a line, motion itself has nothing to do with a line; and finally that, although the positions occupied by the moving body vary with the different moments of duration, though it even creates distinct moments by the mere fact of occupying different positions, duration properly so called has no moments which are identical or external to one another, being essentially heterogeneous, continuous, and with no analogy to number. (Bergson, 2001, p.120)

Duration as lived time is primordially heterogeneous and qualitative multiplicity. It stands for a temporal flux immediately experienced before conceptualization. In this sense, for Bergson, the mental synthesis refers to the immediate act of consciousness which precedes the objectification of the intellect. Yet, through the activity of the intellect, we represent the inner dynamism of temporality in terms of space. By abstracting our conscious states from their quality and arranging them in a line, we regard them as identical to each other. This leads us to conceive them in a homogeneous medium, namely objectified time. Likewise, by symbolizing real duration with homogeneous time, we distort the concrete flow of duration and we transform its dynamic progress into static measurable units that form quantitative multiplicity. When our ego communicates with the external world, our successive psychic states become externalized concerning their objective causes. As a result of

this, Bergson claims that, without any effort, our inner life is depicted in a homogenous medium by being dependent on the conditions of the external world:

Thus the mutual externality which material objects gain from their juxtaposition in homogeneous space reverberates and spreads into the depth of the consciousness: little by little our sensations are distinguished from one another like the external causes which gave rise to them, and our feelings or ideas come to be separated like the sensations with which they are contemporaneous. (Bergson, 2001, p.126)

What is immediate to consciousness is the concrete experience of the flow of life which manifests itself in heterogeneous duration. But consciousness guided by intelligence experiences this reality through symbolization. In this context, Bergson signifies that there are two aspects of conscious life insofar as two aspects of time. On the one hand, beneath the homogeneous time, which is the representation of real time, there is a heterogeneous duration whose moments penetrate each other. On the other hand, beneath the self whose conscious states are determined with clear-cut distinctions, there is a self whose states of mind melt into each other; a self that lives in the harmony of duration. In this sense, Bergson affirms that time discloses itself in two ways to conscious life. Although intellectualism, a link that consciousness establishes with the outside world, ordinarily grasps time in its spatiality, there is a real duration, the indivisible flow, in the depth of consciousness. As objectification and conceptualizations cover up this immediate flow, its dynamism can only be intuited by withdrawing into the creative power of life.

Accordingly, in *Bergson's Philosophy of Self-Overcoming: Thinking without Negativity or Time as Striving*, Messay Kebede portrays the profound distinction between duration and space in terms of effort. He asserts that instead of ordering the moments of time one after the other, to consider them as forming a dynamic process by being within each other is recognizing the effort, that is, “the very act of holding in the present a condensed mode of existence” (Kebede, 2019, p.70). The characterization of time as effort sheds light on the difference of duration from spatial time. For Kebede, instantaneity and the conception of homogeneous time hinder effort because of their static property. The fusion of moments in duration

implies an accumulated process that can be considered as an effort, not as a passive formation. This process, for him, does not include already established contents as in spatial time. On the contrary, contents are created in duration, and effort is required for these contents to come into existence. To imagine time as duration is to discover this creation within the underlying and continuous effort. In this sense, Kebede defines duration as a self-creation:

Where there is duration or effort, not only nothing is the same as before, since to conserve is essentially to change, but more importantly, change through the fusion of moments of time is actually self-creation. Indeed, a change resulting from an internal process of fusion cannot be attributed to an external agent or be categorized as an effect. (Kebede, 2019, p.71)

By focusing on the self-creation of duration, Kebede describes the change in terms of the inborn growth, that is, the evolution of duration resulting from an internal process generated by endless effort. From this perspective, he states that change in duration cannot be taken into account with the effect as in the case of its spatial representation since “with effort, change is not what happens to things; it is rather what things concoct, thereby altering themselves” (Kebede, 2019, p.71). The sense of cause and effect that occurs when we conceive the change in homogeneous time leads us to attribute change as deliberate and determined. But, for Kebede, there is a creative effort in duration which provides for the continuity between the previous and next state as well as progress through the process of self-overcoming. That is to say, change in terms of self-creation is accomplished by duration’s surpassing itself with an inherent effort. To explain this, Kebede makes an analogy between duration and balloon:

The image of duration as an expanding balloon suggests another important specification about effort and self-creation. Just as the balloon increases its volume by its own inner expansion, and not for the purpose of filling a preexisting internal empty space, so too duration creates, surpasses its limits by its own inner growth. This is to say that creation is not triggered by lack or emptiness; rather, it is the product of that which is full and compact. (Kebede, 2019, p.72)

In this context, Kebede’s characterization of duration in terms of self-creation can be associated with Bergson’s idea of freedom. Since he constructs an inseparable bond

between duration, deeper self, and freedom, Kebede's approach points out the deeper self which is able to overcome itself, therefore, creating itself due to its existence in duration. Because duration is in itself full, self-overcoming is not destined by any lack or external pressure. Likewise, since there is no distinction or separation in duration, nothing from outside can have an influence upon it. It is an internal progress "creating means and goals as it advances" (Kebede, 2019, p.72).

Duration as effort grows itself at each moment within inner alteration, that is, self-change. The fundamental self, by residing in this reality, is in the process of creating itself through internal changes. However, the superficial self, by living in spatial time, externalizes this reality and breaks it into the cause-and-effect relationship. In this respect, to emphasize duration's inner dynamism and its translation into mechanical world, Bergson distinguishes between two kinds of self. But, before I address this issue, which is intrinsically connected with freedom, in the next chapter, a closer examination of the link between consciousness and duration will help to figure out Bergson's ideas on the self and freedom.

#### **2.4. The Relationship between Consciousness and Duration**

Following his distinction between space and duration, Bergson seems to argue that consciousness exists in two different ways insofar as it experiences life in two fashions: immediately (in duration) and indirectly (in space). As stated above, before objectification, what is primordial to consciousness is the direct experience of duration. In this experience, consciousness and duration are not external to each other. Here, Barnard suggests that the term duration in Bergson corresponds to "ever-changing nature of consciousness, a consciousness expressed and manifested in-and-through-and-as *time*" (Barnard, 2011, p.6). In this sense, for Bergson, duration is the temporal effusion of our awareness; it is a dynamic, self-renewing, and unpredictable flow. It stands for consciousness' experience of life and itself in purity unmixed with conceptuality. In other words, consciousness as time vividly feels the continual flow of life and in the light of this awareness it grasps its essential (non-objectified)

existence in the harmony with life. It can be articulated that duration is reached by consciousness in its pre-reflective existence. Barnard illuminates this point by stressing the link between intuition and the deeper self and he asserts that duration is “accessed through a subtle intuitive introspective awareness, not simply as the contents of our consciousness, but rather as the dynamic essence of who we really are, both the inner knower and what that inner knower knows” (Barnard, 2011, p.7). Along with the inner dynamism of life, through introspection, pre-reflective consciousness realizes that its states also dwell in this dynamism owing to the fact that they dissolve into each other in duration. When it turns inward what consciousness is immediately aware of is the flow of duration, but this requires not being attached to space. In this context, Bergson’s notion of intuition plays a significant role to explicate what it means for consciousness to pre-reflectively experience duration by being detached from the analysis that assumes spatiality.

In *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Bergson puts forward that the absolute reality, that is, absolute knowledge of duration, can be seized only through intuition. In contrast to relative knowledge, which is obtained by moving around the object, absolute or complete knowledge can be attained by the capability of getting in the object. According to him, the first refers to analysis whereas the second implies intuition. Given this, Bergson draws this distinction to signify the crucial difference between our analytic knowledge which works with the concept of space, and intuitional knowledge which comes to the scene in real time. While analyzing, we approach to the object from a specific point of view and distance ourselves from it. That is to say, by the method of analysis, we take a certain position to observe the object and we accept it as standing in front of us, occupying space. Analysis, then, is a representation “taken from a certain point of view, a translation made with certain symbols, will always remain imperfect in comparison with the object of which a view has been taken, or, which the symbols seek to express” (Bergson, 1912, p.5). Thus, Bergson claims that in this way we can only know the object from a limited perspective. However, the method of intuition, in Bergson’s account, is beyond all the particular points of view to the extent that it is independent of the spatial

conceptualization (symbolization). In intuition, we appreciate the object in itself by being involved in its inner dynamic experience. In other words, through intuition, we grasp its uniqueness which takes place in duration. By participating in the peculiar dynamism of the object, we immediately and pre-conceptually perceive its internal changes, its inner evolution. Hence, for Bergson, the act of intuition precedes objectification and conceptualization. It is the simple act in which absolute reality primordially reveals itself to consciousness. When this reality is viewed from outside, it is described in terms of symbols in order to indicate its relation to other things:

It follows from this that an absolute could only be given in an intuition, whilst everything else falls within the province of analysis. By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is, to elements common both to it and other objects. (Bergson, 1912, p.7)

In this perspective, Bergson's distinction between two ways of knowledge corresponds to consciousness' relation to duration and space. Within the simple act of intuition, consciousness lays down itself in duration and perfectly sees the absolute reality in its dynamic flow. This flow can only be discovered in itself with pre-reflective consciousness because in reflection consciousness perceives the world analytically to the extent that it externalizes itself by projecting itself into space. Thus, within the material world, consciousness in reflection understands reality in terms of space, construes it from a specific perspective, translates it into clear-cut distinctions, and expresses it with symbolical representations. In this analytical process, consciousness looks at reality from the outside, therefore, it does not participate in it. Accordingly, Bergson affirms that the reality that can be sympathized from within by intuition is our own individuality in streaming through time, that is to say, our own enduring self that is freed from space. In parallel with his claim, consciousness' pre-reflective (immediate) and reflective (indirect) awareness can be articulated in this way. When I turn my attention to my own self, first of all, I discern it as an outer shell to which all the sensations come from the

physical world. These sensations form a numerical multiplicity by being arranged in a row and “they tend to group themselves into objects” (Bergson, 1912, p.10). Along with them, memories and tendencies, which are set apart from the profoundness of my personality, come to the scene to interpret these sensations; “they rest on the surface of my mind without being absolutely myself” (Bergson, 1912, p.10). Here, what Bergson wants to emphasize is that all of them emerge as separated from me insofar as they are separated from each other in the outer world, that is, spatial composition. But, when I withdraw from this order and turn inside myself, in the depth of my consciousness, I seize a different multitude in which my personality endures:

There is, beneath these sharply cut crystals and this frozen surface, a continuous flux which is not comparable to any flux I have ever seen. There is a succession of states, each of which announces that which follows and contains that which precedes it. They can, properly speaking, only be said to form multiple states when I have already passed them and turn back to observe their track. Whilst I was experiencing them they were so solidly organized, so profoundly animated with a common life, that I could not have said where any one of them finished or where another commenced. In reality no one of them begins or ends, but all extend into each other. (Bergson, 1912, p.11)

Therefore, by an effort of intuition, consciousness leaves behind its indirect experience with life and penetrates into duration in which, along with the absolute reality, the absolute knowledge of the self is possible. This is to say that, as Kebede agrees, in intuition, duration “donates itself as a qualitative existence, as an immanent consciousness in which subject and object coincide” (Kebede, 2019, pp. 65-66). In this respect, within the framework of Bergson’s method of intuition, the relationship between consciousness and duration gives way to establish the distinction between the fundamental self and superficial self from which the account of freedom (self-creation), the keystone of Bergson’s philosophy, is disclosed.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE IDEA OF SELF AND FREEDOM IN BERGSON'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson tries to demonstrate that the issue of freedom stands for a pseudo-problem when it is placed in a homogeneous time and questioned through the superficial self that belongs to spatial time, that is, improper translation of duration. According to him, the common mistake shared by those who defend or oppose determinism is the abstraction of time from the concrete flow of duration. In this illegitimate way, the self becomes mechanized by being cut off from the dynamism of duration, which also constitutes its essence, and whether its choices are free or not is evaluated under the rule of causality. But, for Bergson, this wrong conceptualization does not reveal the true nature of freedom which resides in the creativity of life. Below the mechanical order of the world, there is the power of life which constantly renews itself in the flow of duration. Accordingly, he states that below the superficial self, there is the fundamental self, the self that dwells in duration, from which the free act springs. In other words, beyond free will and determinism, the meaning of freedom lies in the deeper self that constantly creates itself through its acts by blending with duration that reflects its whole personality. In this light, by putting duration and deeper self at the center, Bergson critically examines the physical and psychological determinism, which are based on the principle of causality, to underlie his characterization of freedom as self-creation. In this framework, this chapter aims to explicate Bergson's notion of freedom in terms of spontaneous creation through two crucial questions: (1) what is the relationship between the immediate experience of life and freedom? (2) how the spatial conceptualization of time covers up the essence of freedom and transforms it into the freedom of choice by will? As Bergson's theory of self discloses the first question, firstly, I will focus on the distinction between two aspects of the self. Then, to

answer the second question, I will touch upon Bergson's interpretation of free will and determinism to disclose the origin of the free act. Finally, along with these critical points, by introducing the creativity of life as an evolutionary movement, I will try to establish a link between freedom and self-creation on the ground of Bergson's philosophy of life.

### **3.1. The Distinction between Two Aspects of the Self**

As signified in the previous chapter, the two aspects of conscious life put forward by Bergson by considering consciousness' relation to duration and space lead to the dual structure of the self. On the one side, there is the superficial self that emerges owing to the reduction of quality to quantity, that is, heterogeneous duration to homogeneous time. On the other side, there is the fundamental self that dwells in the concrete totality of its interpenetrated states of mind. Precisely speaking, the superficial self appears in spatial time and regards itself as a component of the mechanical composition of the universe whereas the fundamental self is in duration and intuits the essence of its personality, that is, its uniqueness manifested in the organic unity of its psychic states. In this sense, the superficial self is subject to the homogeneous time that is made as an object for scientific and practical purposes. It socially and practically interacts with the world under analysis and objectification. However, through the intuition of duration, the fundamental self intuits the primordial continuity of life that is intrinsic to the flux of duration and cannot be described in terms of the rule of matter.

Accordingly, Bergson defines the fundamental self as the deeper self and separates it from its spatial and social representation to point out the inner self that is unfolding in duration as absolutely independent of space. As it stems from our misconception of time, he argues that our ordinary understanding of self corresponds to the spatial version of the inner self. For him, similar to the symbolization of real time, we tend to externalize the deeper self by representing it in space. "As the self thus refracted, and thereby broken to pieces is much better adapted to the requirements of social life

in general and language in particular” (Bergson, 2001, p.128). Through externalization, by submitting to the habit of intelligence which operates with analysis, consciousness by degrees misses its contact with the deeper self and draws away from its inner life. In this sense, Bergson asserts that to rescue the deeper self, we must leave aside to think of mental states as discrete multiplicity by purifying flowing inner states from their images projected in space:

In other words, our perceptions, sensations, emotions, and ideas occur under two aspects: the one clear and precise, but impersonal; the other confused, ever changing, and inexpressible, because language cannot get hold of it without arresting its mobility... If we have been led to distinguish two forms of multiplicity, two forms of duration, we must accept each conscious state, taken by itself, to assume a different aspect according as we consider it within a discrete multiplicity or confused multiplicity, in the time as quality, in which it is produced or in the time as quantity, into which it is projected. (Bergson, 2001, p.129)

Here, Bergson characterizes two aspects of the self as two layers of consciousness. In the depth of consciousness, inhabits the inner self to which neither stability nor determinations can be attributed. Thus, it refers to “the deep-seated self which ponders and decides, which heats and blazes up, is a self whose states and changes permeate one another” (Bergson, 2001, p.125). Although pure duration expresses this hidden self in an uninterrupted flow, the deeper self undergoes an alteration and becomes the external self in its engagement with the external world through its representation in a homogenous medium. In Bergson’s account, this modified self refers to a limited and shaped version of the fundamental self as it is a superficial self that is prisoned in concepts, “whose existence is made up of distinct moments, whose states are separated from one another and easily expressed in words” (Bergson, 2001, p.138).

Insofar as we live in a social environment and communicate with the world through language, we are inevitably surrounded by language’s distortion of our feelings. When we express our impressions, we fixate our sensations and feelings by molding them into the stationary structure of concepts. Thence, we separate the feeling from the qualitative multiplicity in which it blends with the others, because while

expressing it with language, we represent it with the object in the outside world, therefore, disrupting its incessant state of becoming. In order to explain this degradation further, Bergson associates it with the transformation of the inner self to the external self through its becoming impersonal and effusing in space because of language and social requirements:

In the same way as the fleeting duration of our ego is fixed by its projection in homogeneous space, our constantly changing impressions, wrapping themselves round the external object which is their cause, take on its definite outlines and its immobility... In short, the word with well-defined outlines, the rough and ready word, which stores up the stable, common, and consequently impersonal element in the impressions of mankind, overwhelms or at least covers over the delicate and fugitive impressions of our individual consciousness. (Bergson, 2001, pp.130-132)

Along with its unique sensations and feelings, the deeper self immediately experiences the ongoing process in which its states are constantly intermingled. In this process, every state of mind, every sensation is subject to perpetual change and none of them are identical to each other. To put it this way, the emotion I feel in a moment arises from the process of my intertwined psychic states until the moment I felt that emotion. But, since the emotion I feel at another moment will spring from another qualitative process, these two emotions are not identical even though they are defined by the same name. If this qualitative change of the same feeling, such as my joy, is not visible to me, “it is because I perceive it through the object which is its cause, through the word which translates it” (Bergson, 2001, p.131).

In this context, for Bergson, language engages with objectification in which the dynamic process of the deeper self is fragmented for the sake of externalization. Here, externalization refers to the concealment of immediate consciousness owing to the isolation of each psychic state from the others in order to posit their external relation to each other. This feature of language is fueled by its connection with the intellect. In that regard, Muldoon contrasts the intellect and intuition. For him, “the intellect operates in the material sphere using division, spatialization, and geometry for the achievement of practical results. Unlike intuition, the intellect was not designed to plumb the depths of our inner life” (Muldoon, 2006, p.102). Therefore,

language inherits a spatial setting that deforms the confused multiplicity of conscious states by breaking the continuity of interpenetrated states of mind. When we describe our feeling, we cut it from the organic whole, which is acquired by intuition, and we represent it as distinct from other states in a homogeneous medium, thus, we put it into automated, colorless concepts:

A violent love or a deep melancholy takes possession of our soul: here we feel a thousand different elements which dissolve into and permeate one another without any precise outlines, without the least tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another; hence their originality. We distort them as soon as we distinguish a numerical multiplicity in their confused mass: what will it be, then, when we set them out, isolated from one another in this homogeneous medium which may be called either time or space, whichever you prefer? (Bergson, 2001, p.132)

Now, the deeper self inherits the process of becoming by dwelling in a ceaseless flux of duration. However, Bergson emphasizes that this immediate experience of inner life within its dynamism becomes fixed under the abstraction of language. As he distinguishes space from time to refine duration, in this light, Muldoon elucidates that “Bergson contrasts the self defined by language (spatial) to a self understood beyond language (non-spatial) to distill the real self that is constantly in a state of becoming” (Muldoon, 2006, p.98). To this extent, fixation, along with objectification, covers up the continuous change that occurs in the multiplicity of conscious states. Provided that, by virtue of defining and naming, we suppose that we have examined our feeling or sensation although “we have really replaced it by a juxtaposition of lifeless states which can be translated into words, and each of which constitutes the common element, the impersonal residue, of the impressions felt in a given case by the whole of society” (Bergson, 2001, p.133). In this sense, to shed light on the deeper self which lives in its pure duration with its preserved subjectivity, Bergson argues against the reductionist attitude of language which covers up uniqueness and individuality. According to him, language reduces subjectivity into objectivity by signifying states of mind with the same word each time. Therefore, he claims that, in terms of fixation and generalization, language

objectifies the emotions and feelings that each of us experiences uniquely in her inner life which mirrors her original personality:

Just as we can go on inserting points between two positions of a moving body without ever filling up the space traversed, in the same way, by the mere fact that we associate states with states and that these states are set side by side instead of permeating one another, we fail to translate completely what our soul experiences: there is no common measure between mind and language. (Bergson, 2001, pp.164-165)

The reason behind Bergson's focus on language is to postulate how, in particular, language shapes the inner life of the deeper self by converting the peculiar qualitative multiplicity of mental states into the conceptual structure in which an analysis can occur. In this direction, to generalize the issue, Bergson proposes that the superficial self, within the conceptuality, superficially and objectively exists in the external world in order to be adapted to the requirements of social life. Because of the constraints of language and spatial composition, the fundamental self becomes alienated from the dynamism of its inner reality and exposed to the fixation of social life to practically serve out the needs of everyday life. According to Harris, that is why the social and practical orientations conceal our inner lives even from us:

Consequently, the fundamental self is hidden from ourselves. It is also hidden from others. Man bears no organic relation to his fellows. One cannot communicate his inner experiences to others. His attempt to do so-providing he himself knows what those inner experiences are-eventuates in an articulation of conscious states but the very articulation robs them of their living reality. (Harris, 1933, pp.515-516)

For the sake of communication with the world and interaction with the society, the fundamental self comes out to the surface from the depth of consciousness, in which dynamism is involved, and transforms into the social self that perceives reality in terms of the material world with the static clear-cut states of consciousness. In this way, disjointed conscious states are substituted for the interpenetrated conscious states to comply with the rules of matter. Since these states of mind are separated from the organic whole of the inner self, they "float on the surface, like dead leaves on the water of a pond" (Bergson, 2001, p.135). At this point, Bergson affirms that the lifeless mental states of the surface-dwelling self, that is, the external self,

become subject to the law of association in the sense that they are assimilated in the mechanical order of the world in which everything is externally connected:

If, in proportion, as we get away from the deeper strata of the self our conscious states tend more and more to assume the form of a numerical multiplicity, and to spread out in a homogeneous space, it is just because these conscious states tend to become more and more lifeless, more and more impersonal... External to one another, they keep up relations among themselves in which the inmost nature of each of them counts for nothing, relations which can therefore be classified. It may thus be said that they are associated by contiguity or for some logical reasons. (Bergson, 2001, p.136)

By pointing to the role of social and practical purposes in forming the superficial self through abstraction and isolation, Bergson explicates how the theory of associationism is applied to our conception of superficial self. In accordance with the language and the establishment of social life, which are constructed artificially, associationism intends to regard the self as a compilation of distinguished psychic states and it postulates that “each state is conditioned by the preceding states” (Harris, 1933, p.514). However, as Harris points out, “this self of the associationistic theory is only the superficial self, the self that is the result of the interaction of the real self with its environment” (Harris, 1933, p.514). In this sense, for Bergson, this consideration assumes the principle of causality in which transition from one state of mind to another occurs in a causal relation. As it follows from language’s spatial character, Bergson admits that determinist arguments arise from the clear-cut distinctions provided by a homogeneous understanding of time. Since we conceive conscious states as externally related to each other in a line and the self as a totality of these distinct states, we try to figure out the relationship between the self and its states over causal and mechanical explanations. Hence, unlike duration that consists of an intertwined multiplicity of conscious states, “desire, aversion, fear, temptation are here presented as distinct things which there is no inconvenience in naming separately” (Bergson, 2001, p.159). This critical point, the associationist perspective, is the target of Bergson’s argument against psychological determinism in favor of freedom, which will be explored in the next part in more detail.

Following his distinction between the act of intuition and analysis, Bergson asserts that these two aspects of the self seize reality from different perspectives. On the one hand, the fundamental self acquires reality in terms of the process of life, that is, the process of continual change. On the other hand, the superficial self accesses reality in terms of the static order of the material realm. These two aspects of the self do not stand for two split parts of the personality in Bergson's consideration. However, they refer to two sides of the same self in which reality manifests itself immediately through intuition or indirectly through spatial representation. In its immediate experience, the self perceives life in its organic unity to which its inner states dynamically participate. But, in its indirect experience, the self understands life as a mechanical composition that is formed through sequences of distinct instants. Actually, owing to the fact of the practical needs of social life, what we first sense is our superficial side. In our daily life, we live and act with our external self without being aware of our inner existence. In this regard, Bergson argues that our pragmatic and social side obscures the inner self and the immediacy of life. Thus, through the superficial self, which is our outer shell, we are commonly conscious of our mental states that are separated from one another and our external existence that is subject to the spatial understanding of time. "It is the same self which perceives distinct states at first, and which, by afterwards concentrating its attention will see these states melt into one another like the crystals of a snow-flake when touched for some time with the finger" (Bergson, 2001, pp.138-139).

In this framework, by emphasizing the dominance of the external self over the inner self, Bergson tries to demonstrate how the usual spatial conception of the self gives rise to the pseudo-problems that can be solved only by an appeal to the fundamental, living self. Along with the wide apart moments in which the conscious states are obviously defined and certainly classified, the life of the superficial self, formed through an artificial structure, responds to the demands of social life. This is why psychology as science works with this superficial reality without noticing that "it restricts itself to the study of what has taken place and leaves out what is going on" (Bergson, 2001, p. 139). But, when it presents the concrete self as a unity of psychic

states that are lined up in a homogenous medium; when it contends with the process of becoming in terms of the static picture; and when it confuses succession with simultaneity under the spatial conception of time, it creates difficulties for the philosophical problems, especially for the question of freedom:

And these difficulties will multiply the greater the efforts it makes to overcome them, for all its efforts will only bring into clearer light the absurdity of the fundamental hypothesis by which it spreads out time in space and puts succession at the very center of simultaneity... We shall see that the contradictions implied in the problems of causality, freedom, personality, spring from no other source, and that, if we wish to get rid of them, we have only to go back to the real and concrete self and give up its symbolical substitute. (Bergson, 2001, p.139)

Accordingly, Bergson proceeds to conclude that the problem of freedom is limited within the arguments of free will and determinism because of the fact that the opponents or defenders of determinism base their views upon the superficial self and consider time as a homogenous entity. Therefore, by distancing themselves from the real self, they do not comprehend the true nature of freedom which displays itself in the deeper self. Put it differently, for Bergson, freedom signifies what is beyond the libertarian or the determinist understanding in the sense that it dwells in the deeper self which concretely experiences life within real time, that is, duration. Considering this, to bring his notion of freedom to the fore, in the third chapter of *Time and Free Will*, Bergson prominently examines insignificant approaches to freedom under the principle of causality, contingency, and prediction.

### **3.2. Free Will and Determinism**

In Bergson's approach, questioning freedom through the notion of free will brings us face to face with two opposite schemes of nature, namely dynamism and mechanism. In the dynamic conception, the free power of nature is detached from the mechanical laws that rule matter. On the contrary, regardless of the organic system that is involved in nature, mechanism solely tries to explain nature according to its narrow configuration which consists of necessary laws. Along with these two different

perspectives, Bergson claims that dynamism and mechanism conceive the relationship between laws and facts as different from each other. According to dynamism, what is primordial is the fact, and facts denote the absolute reality. Given this, dynamism considers laws as expressing this reality in terms of symbols. Nevertheless, by overturning this treatment, mechanism regards laws as a priority and accepts the particular fact as nothing more than a case that satisfies the law. In this sense, for Bergson, dynamic and mechanic understandings of nature differ from each other in attributing reality to facts or necessary laws:

As he looks higher and higher, the believer in dynamism thinks that he perceives facts which more and more elude the grasp of laws: he thus sets up the fact as the absolute reality, and the law as the more or less symbolical expression of this reality. Mechanism, on the contrary, discovers within the particular fact a certain number of laws of which the fact is thus made to be the meeting point, and nothing else: on this hypothesis it is the law which becomes the genuine reality. (Bergson, 2001, pp.140-141)

To demonstrate in what respect these two hypotheses are significant for his notion of freedom beyond free will and determinism, Bergson explains the crucial difference between them further. In this context, he asserts that the question of why dynamism and mechanism attach greater reality to facts or laws can be answered through their concerns of simplicity. Mechanism affirms that any tenet is simple if calculation can be applied to it and the effect becomes predictable thanks to this calculation. Therefore, “by the very definition, the notion of inertia becomes simpler than that of freedom, the homogeneous simpler than the heterogeneous, the abstract simpler than the concrete” (Bergson, 2001, p.141). That is to say, by establishing the facts under the laws, for mechanism, the simplicity comes from the determination of the future actions between possibilities according to the previous events. Through abstraction, mechanism represents the causes of the facts in a homogeneous space in order to comprehend the lawful relation between cause and effect. It is an abstraction in the sense that mechanism disrupts the particularity of the fact, which means the peculiar organic whole of the fact, by attempting to explain it with symbolical representations, namely laws. In this sense, Bergson emphasizes that the mechanistic approach reduces the organic structure of nature to a static arrangement for the sake

of simple expressions by means of laws. On the other hand, for dynamism, what mechanism regards as simple stands for complex because the notion that is supposed to be basically explained with law includes the blend of other notions that can also be formulated under rules. Hence, dynamism does not engage with explaining the facts in terms of laws to understand the relationship between notions. Apart from the abstraction and complexity imposed by lawful order, dynamism deals with what is concrete to comprehend the self-sufficient fact in its particularity. In this light, Bergson wants to explicate that, away from symbolical expressions, dynamism concentrates on what is concrete and simple by taking into account the immediate experience of life:

Regarded from this new point of view, the idea of spontaneity is indisputably simpler than that of inertia, since the second can be understood and defined only by means of the first, while the first is self-sufficient. For each of us has the immediate knowledge (be it thought true or fallacious) of his free spontaneity, without the notion of inertia having to do with this knowledge. But, if we wish to define the inertia of matter, we must say that it cannot move or stop of its own accord, that every body perseveres in the state of rest or motion so long as it is not acted upon by any force: and in both cases we are unavoidably carried back to the idea of activity. (Bergson, 2001, p.142)

Here, Bergson states that mechanism defines inertia as a simpler notion than spontaneity since physical laws can determine what inertia is, while they cannot specify what spontaneity is. However, dynamism considers inertia as a derived notion originated from the definition of the lack of action, movement. Hence, for dynamism, what we immediately know and concretely feel is our freedom but through abstraction and calculation in the second place we identify inertia. In this sense, Bergson suggests that human actions are conceptualized in two distinct ways in line with our comprehension of the connection between facts and laws, that is, concrete (immediate) and abstract (indirect). On the one side, according to the mechanistic approach, human actions are determined and can be foreseen insofar as the necessary relationship between cause and effect can apply to them like in the case of physical objects. This implies, for Bergson, the core of the physical and psychological determinism. On the other side, the dynamic view holds that human actions cannot be subject to any deterministic explanations since they are

primordially free and spontaneous. Therefore, Bergson maintains that even the arguments for free will fall into the sphere of mechanism in the sense that they consider acts of humans in a lawful arrangement by placing the issue of choice in a homogenous understanding of time. In this light, Harris demonstrates why this is a misconception for Bergson by emphasizing Bergson's objection to the choice of the self from alternatives:

Since determinists and free-willists have a mechanistic conception of the self, they represent an act of choosing in the following manner: the self is viewed as at a point O hesitating between definitely marked out courses of action OX and OZ. According to the determinists, if the self decides on OX, that is the only path it could take. According to the free-willists, if one decides on OX, he has chosen one of two paths that were equally open to him. He is free because he might have chosen the alternative. (Harris, 1933, p.514)

Consequently, in order to demonstrate his notion of freedom as arising out of dynamic understanding, Bergson firstly analyses physical and psychological determinism, then he discusses these attitudes in their relation to duration.

### **3.2.1. Physical and Psychological Determinism**

In his philosophy of life that assumes dynamism, Bergson recognizes facts as having a higher reality than laws. In this sense, by contrasting mechanism and dynamism, he illuminates in what respect physical and psychological facts become universal and certain facts under the necessity of a mechanistic system against freedom. This system, for Bergson, involves two kinds of deterministic approaches, namely physical and psychological. He argues that the second one, which is based on an incorrect understanding of duration, can be reducible to the first one which is strictly connected with mechanical hypotheses of the material world.

According to physical determinism, every physical phenomenon consists of atoms and molecules whose movements are subject to laws. Regarding this, the theories of matter try to explain the world of matter through the movements of these particles. By the same token, these theories accept that the movements of nerve cells are

responsible for changes in the molecular structure of the brain, therefore, in our nervous system, “so that, the sensations, feelings, and ideas which succeed one another in us can be defined as mechanical resultants” (Bergson, 2001, p.144). In this context, for Bergson, the ground of transition from one state of mind to the other, that is, the cause of the change in our psychic states is analyzed in terms of physical phenomena whose relations to each other are composed of the forces of repulsion and attraction:

For to admit the universality of this theorem is to assume, at bottom, that the material points of which the universe is composed are subject solely to forces of attraction and repulsion, arising from these points themselves and possessing intensities which depend only on their distances: hence the relative position of these material points at a given moment- whatever be their nature- would be strictly determined by relation to what it was at the preceding moment. (Bergson, 2001, p.145)

However, this necessity does not dwell in our psychic life because we cannot establish a determined bond between our conscious states and cerebral atoms. Departing from physical determinism, psychological determinism attempts to describe our inner life by defining the relationship between our psychic states with physical laws. For this mechanical assumption, there occurs certain parallelism between the activity of nerve cells and conscious states which allows for calculating the subsequent state of mind, thus, human action thanks to the antecedent situation. Yet, what Bergson maintains is that even though there is parallelism on scarce occasions, this cannot sufficiently prove the underlying reason for mental states since it cannot absolutely demonstrate that “the psychic fact is fatally determined by the molecular movement” (Bergson, 2001, p.148).

In their theories, physical and psychological determinism both postulate the law of conservation energy which can be employed by a system in which a return to the previous state is possible without changing the whole. Hence, in these systems, in addition to being able to predict future states, inferences about past states can be made from present states. However, according to Bergson, the law of conservation energy that reflects homogeneous time cannot be applicable to a living being because conscious states are processes which are rooted in duration. Processes are dynamic

formations in which “the idea of putting things back in their place at the end of a certain time involves a kind of absurdity” (Bergson, 2001, p.153). Apart from the material world, in the case of conscious states turning back is impossible in the sense that each moment in duration is unique and qualitatively reflects the organic whole. In this context, Bergson argues that, by approaching a living being with mechanistic understanding, psychological determinism accepts the law of conservation energy as universal and applies it to the states of consciousness because it falls into the fundamental mistake, that is, confuses duration with time:

As we are not accustomed to observe ourselves directly, but perceive ourselves through forms borrowed from the external world, we are led to believe that real duration, the duration lived by consciousness, is the same as the duration which glides over the inert atoms without penetrating and altering them. Hence it is that we do not see any absurdity in putting things back in their place after a lapse of time, in supposing the same motives acting afresh on the same persons, and in concluding that these causes would again produce the same effect. (Bergson, 2001, p.54)

The assumption of psychological determinism promotes the associationist theory of mind in which the actual state of consciousness is regarded as causally connected with the former states. According to this conception, the relationship between states of mind occurs in a necessity in which the same cause sets forth the same effect at every turn. Nevertheless, Bergson claims that necessity cannot be attributed to conscious life because even the same state of consciousness is qualitatively different from other conscious states. In other words, as duration refers to a dynamic process, what Bergson emphasizes is that each state of mind arises uniquely without being subject to a causal relationship. Therefore, even in successive mental states there resides “a difference of quality which will always frustrate any attempt to deduce any one of them *a priori* from its predecessors” (Bergson, 2001, p.156).

The fallacy of psychological determinism is triggered by improper conceptions of self and the multiplicity of conscious states that are addressed in the theory of associationism. As stated earlier, associationist determinism approaches the self quantitatively by regarding it as a composition of mental states. According to this doctrine, the strongest mental state affects the others by dominating them. In this

sense, associationist determinism considers psychic states as clearly distinct from each other and neglects their co-existence. By attributing quantity to psychic states, associationism assigns superiority to the most intensive and strongest feeling or sensation in such a situation and considers all the other states of mind as necessarily connected with this superior conscious state. In this way, according to Bergson, this doctrine removes the personality from sensations and actions. It only deals with impersonal elements because psychic states become lifeless and lose their quality through their separation from each other. To illustrate this, Bergson gives an example of smelling a rose. When I smell a rose, my blended childhood memories immediately surround me. That is, in the scent of a rose, my memories uniquely come together, and they only mean to me:

To others, it will smell differently. - It is always the same scent, you will say, but associated with different ideas. - I am quite willing that you should express yourself in this way; but do not forget that you have first removed the personal element from the different impressions which the rose makes on each of us; you have retained only the objective aspect, that part of the scent of the rose which is public property and thereby belongs to space. (Bergson, 2001, pp.161-162)

In fact, Bergson argues that psychological determinism ensures the juxtaposition of conscious states to associate them with each other. In this respect, by laying out conscious states in a homogeneous medium, determinists attempt to observe them, therefore, analyze their connection with each other. Hence, they disregard the difference of multiplicity of interpenetration from multiplicity of juxtaposition. Basically, for Bergson, along with the distinction between fundamental self and superficial self, this implies the contrast of duration with homogeneous time:

As we dig below the surface and get down to real self, do its states of consciousness cease to stand in juxtaposition and begin to permeate and melt into one another, and each to be tinged with the colouring of all the others. Thus each of us has his own way of loving and hating; and this love or this hatred reflects his whole personality. (Bergson, 2001, p.164)

In this light, Bergson admits that on the ground of the mechanical explanation of psychological determinism, there is a confusion of the dynamism of duration with the stasis of spatial time. For this reason, before precisely putting forward his

understanding of freedom unfolded in duration, he draws attention to the incompatibility between contingency, prediction, the principle of causality, and duration.

### **3.2.2. Contingency, Prediction, Causality, and Duration**

In Bergson's account, on the ground of the arguments for free will and determinism lies the conception of time as spatial. The upholders of free will argue that when we accomplish an action, we could decide in the opposite direction because all other courses are equally possible in the decision-making process of consciousness. On the contrary, determinists state that only one action is possible as it is determined by the condition of its anterior. According to the postulation of libertarians, when the self arrives at a certain point, it confronts two open directions and decides on the behalf of one of them. The other path which is not chosen by the self will remain open for the possibility of being made. However, Bergson maintains that the self's conscious activity is a continual growth in which the activity of self and its inclinations for decisions cannot be separated from each other. When defenders of free will separate inclinations of the self from its activity, they come up with an operative ego that ponders two fixed directions:

It must be noticed that the self grows, expands, and changes as it passes through the two contrary states: if not how would it ever come to a decision? Hence, there are not exactly two contrary states, but a large number of successive and different states within which I distinguish, by an effort of imagination, two opposite directions. (Bergson, 2001, pp.175-176)

Therefore, for Bergson, two contrary courses are only symbolical representations that stem from our imagination. In reality, there are no two tendencies, two opposite directions, or else, rather there is a living, developing self that continuously changes and performs its free act out of its organic growth.

According to Bergson, the mechanical view of freedom in terms of free will eventually falls into the sphere of determinism. The symbolism which is used by defenders of free will to demonstrate the contingency of self's action inherently

denotes the absolute necessity of the action because of the fact that the action is considered as performed in a homogeneous time. When the self arrives at a certain point in which it ponders to decide, it is already identified with one direction since this direction is already determined by the preceding hesitations between the two antecedent directions. Given that this direction is necessitated by the past decisions, there is no possibility of choosing the other way. Therefore, Bergson asserts that, by symbolizing the activity of the self with clear-cut directions, “defenders and opponents of free will agree in holding that the action is preceded by a kind of mechanical oscillation between the two points X and Y” (Bergson, 2001, p.179). In this context, for Bergson, through abstraction and symbolization, both take their stance after the action has been accomplished and ignore duration, that is, continual activity in which the self concretely lives. Hence, the question of whether the self could decide otherwise than one of the paths becomes meaningless because, regardless of the answer, this question always signifies the representation of time with space and pure succession with simultaneity. In this respect, Bergson admits that we explain the fact with the law and replace it with the mechanical explanation, therefore, we return to the crucial question of whether time is space:

We have been present at the deliberation of the self in all its phases until the act was performed: then, recapitulating the terms of the series, we perceive succession under the form of simultaneity, we project time into space, and we base our reasoning, consciously or unconsciously on this geometrical figure. But this figure represents a *thing* and not a *progress*; it corresponds, in its inertness, to a kind of stereotyped memory of the whole process of deliberation and the final decision arrived at: how could it give us the least idea of the concrete movement, the dynamic progress by which the deliberation issued in the act? (Bergson, 2001, pp.180- 181)

With its motivations and impulses, the self dwells in a continuous state of becoming in which it immediately recognizes its freedom. But, along with the mechanical explanations, the spatial understanding of time covers up this dynamism and establishes a linear pattern of actions. Concerning this, for Bergson, symbolism is not able to prove the arguments for free will or determinism. Even though determinists insist to predict the self’s future actions, again, in this case, they substitute dynamic conscious states that are uniquely experienced by the self for their image in space. In

other words, by claiming that the act can be predicted thanks to the totality of its antecedents, determinism replaces consciousness' concrete and alive progress with abstract physical symbols. This is the deception of the reflective consciousness in which the interpenetrated moments of duration are confused with the homogeneous time. "Certainly, once the final act is completed, I can ascribe to all the antecedents their proper value, and picture the interplay of these various elements as a conflict or a composition of forces" (Bergson, 2001, p.190). Conscious states are not things but are processes. When the past states of mind are assembled to foresee the future action, they are cut from the organic processes and they are treated as things, hence, their quality is altered. Therefore, when we inquire about the possibility of prediction, "we unwittingly identify that time with which we have to do in the exact sciences, and which is reducible to a number" (Bergson, 2001, p.197).

Accordingly, in Bergson's view, another form of the determinist claim, that is, the principle of causality is incompatible with duration, since it quantifies the states of consciousness in the same way. When the principle of causality affirms the strict determination of each phenomenon through its circumstances, it asserts that the same cause always gives rise to the same effect. In this case, determinism accepts the re-emergence of the same cause in the mental states. However, for Bergson, as the psychic states heterogeneously permeate each other and duration consists of this harmonious blend, the same moments do not happen again. To suppose that there can be two conditions that are identical to each other is "to forget that even the simplest psychic elements possess a personality and a life of their own" (Bergson, 2001, p.200). Thus, each feeling, sensation, impression, or action is produced anew. In this sense, the principle of causality as a universal law forfeits its significance in the inner life of consciousness. In a continual state of becoming, the self changes as long as it exists so that it does not conduct itself in the same way under the authority of the same external condition:

The principle of causality, in so far as it is supposed to bind the future to the present, could never take the form of a necessary principle; for the successive moments of real time are not bound up with one another, and no effort of logic will succeed in proving that what has been will be or will continue to

be, that the same antecedents will always give rise to identical consequents. (Bergson, 2001, p.208)

On the other hand, Bergson states that the formulation of causality in terms of possibility is more natural than in terms of necessity in the sense that it comes from the immediate consciousness. The succession of conscious states may give us the idea of a future action not as necessarily determined but as a possible effect of the cause. In this case, with the effort, the immediate consciousness barely foreshadows the transitional process between the idea and the act. But, since this prefiguration stems from the confused multiplicity of the conscious states, neither it is perfect nor certain. Without any abstraction, it only deals with pure possibility and signifies an analogy “between the succession of objective phenomena and that of our subjective states” (Bergson, 2001, p.212). This understanding of causality, for Bergson, implies the inner causality because it establishes a relationship between psychical potency and the human action which originates from it. Concerning this, Bergson admits that it differs from the external causality which sets up a mathematical relationship between two external phenomena in terms of conditioning each other:

It is now time to add that the relation of inner causality is purely dynamic, and has no analogy with the relation of two external phenomena which condition one another. For as the latter are capable of recurring in a homogeneous space, their relation can be expressed in terms of a law, whereas deep-seated psychic states occur once in consciousness and will never occur again. (Bergson, 2001, p.219)

By separating the inner causality from external causality, Bergson emphasizes the relationship between duration and freedom through the process. For him, freedom lies at the core of the self’s connection with the acts which it accomplishes. This connection is concrete and involves a unique process that cannot be analyzed through externalization. In this light, to demonstrate Bergson’s significant contribution to the problem of freedom, in “Bergson’s Theory of Free Will”, Joel Dolbeault explicates Bergson’s radical approach to causation. He remarks that Bergson presents psychological causation that is compatible with freedom as opposed to mechanical causation that is grounded on the mathematical model in which “causation is only the actualization of a virtual reality” (Dolbeault, 2020, p.106). Mechanical causation

involves deduction as it consists of laws to necessarily establish 'if A then B'. In contrast, there occurs no deduction in psychological causation because "it appears as an effort to move from an idea to an action" (Dolbeault, 2020, p.106). Given that, the notion of causation has a creative character in this model and it amounts to be a dynamic production of a new reality that is not previously fixed rather than any implication of actualization. Accordingly, Dolbeault claims that this creative dimension of causation which belongs to psychic life is what Bergson calls the experience of freedom. For him, in the light of creative causation, Bergson can refuse determinism and develop "an original form of indeterminism: an indeterminism without the notion of alternative possibilities" (Doelbeault, 2020, p.109).

### **3.3. The Origin of Free Act**

Bergson's conception of freedom rests on the crucial linkage between creativity, duration, and the fundamental self. In order to demonstrate the true nature of freedom through its relatedness to these significant notions, he radically explicates the free act beyond the obscurity of determinist and libertarian approaches. As mentioned above, according to Bergson, questioning freedom in terms of necessity or possibility leads to the main illusion, that is, the projection of time to space. From this perspective, he claims that arguments for determinism and free will cannot give a correct account of freedom since they are based on the misconception of real time. In fact, insofar as they neglect primordial time (duration), they misidentify the self. In their attitudes, by representing time with space, they solely emphasize the superficial self which Bergson considers as belonging to the spatial and mechanical world. Regarding this, they describe the self as living in a homogeneous time and being a totality of conscious states. By reminding us the ineffable reality of the fundamental self, Bouton illuminates this point as follows:

The motives examined by deterministic psychology are only capable of rigorously explaining the banal, everyday actions of the social ego, prisoner of the automatism of language and habit, but they do not infringe upon the

profound ego, with its thoughts, its intimate and inexpressible feelings, from which proceeds the genuinely free decision. (Bouton, 2014, p.196)

In this respect, for Bergson, all the distorted theories of freedom have their source in this conceptualization. However, a free act originates from the fundamental self that lives in duration and unfolds itself in the creative power of life. It neither can be calculable nor definable as it arises out of the dynamism of duration. Each moment in duration carries the past and the future within it, thus, consists of the interfused states of consciousness. Therefore, the present is temporal. In that regard, Muldoon clarifies that the present in duration is not “a mathematical point that can be merely registered as having passed. It is rather, in terms of the psychical state, a perception of the immediate past and a determination of the immediate future” (Muldoon, 2016, pp.87-88). In the dynamic structure of duration, each moment reflects the whole soul of the self. In this context, for Bergson, when one of the psychic states is considered as related to the organic totality of the self, we do not need to set psychic states side by side to construct the self and then evaluate its freedom. The free act is the outward expression of the psychic state which is an element of the organic structure and comprised of the whole personality of the self, “since the self alone will have been the author of it, and since it will express the whole of the self” (Bergson, 2001, pp.155-156). Indeed, in Bergson’s understanding, the free act is the disclosure of the fundamental self which immediately and concretely experiences its inner dynamism:

The truth is that the self, by the mere fact of experiencing the first feeling, has already changed to a slight extent when the second supervene: all the time that the deliberation is going on, the self is changing and is constantly modifying the two feelings which agitate it. A dynamic series of states is thus formed which permeate and strengthen one another, and which will lead by a natural evolution to a free act. (Bergson, 2001, p.171)

In the process of becoming, the self dwells in the harmony of its states of consciousness. Hence, in the flow of duration, it intuits its unique individuality which is formed through interpenetrated states of mind. In this respect, according to Bergson, when the self acts freely, it participates in its dynamic process in the sense that its free act creates itself. As the past, the present, and the future are blended in duration, the act of the fundamental self creates not only its future actions but its

entire individuality. Thus, in a constant state of becoming, with its free acts, the self changes each time. This change, for Bergson, implies the inner dynamism in which the self contacts with its unique personality and perceives the creative power of life. Therefore, “it is the whole soul, in fact, which gives rise to the free decision: and the act will be so much the freer the more the dynamic series with which it is connected tends to be the fundamental self” (Bergson, 2001, p.167). In this context, Bergson associates the free act with the fundamental self and its harmonious relationship with duration. It does not imply free will because it is not realized by choosing among alternative ways. The notion of choice, for Bergson, denotes the spatial understanding of time and symbolic representation of the process of the free act, thus, it “cannot hold good against the witness of an attentive consciousness, which shows us inner dynamism as a fact” (Bergson, 2001, p.172).

Accordingly, Bergson notices that freedom cannot be defined as absolute. By separating the fundamental self from its superficial existence, he affirms that there are degrees of freedom. Although free acts stem from the fundamental self, the decisions or acts of the superficial self are subject to the spatial order of the mechanical world which is formed through the chain of cause and effect. In the depth of the consciousness, the fundamental self coincides with reality, that is, the continuous flow of its inner life (duration) which manifests its authentic (genuine) motives and drives. When the act is performed out of this coincidence, it eliminates the automated and determined reactions to the social and practical world. The more we absorb ourselves into sheer duration, the more artificial differences will lose ground enabling us to intuit our freedom as a mere fact. As Muldoon states, “the freedom inherent to human life resides beyond the social representation of stereotypes, power relations, and rationalistic theories of free choice. The self that is free for Bergson is the self that endures” (Muldoon, 2006, p.99). Regarding this, Bergson asserts that the fundamental self acts freely by creating the new whereas the superficial self, by obeying the rules of the matter, follows the social and practical arrangements which employ necessary conditions. Due to the requirements of social life, we often think, decide, and act with our superficial selves in our daily life. For

this reason, our fundamental self is covered up by our social self and our free acts occur in extraordinary moments. These moments come to the scene when we give up behaving like a conscious automaton, that is, the mechanical self. In order to acquire this, through the method of intuition, we need to withdraw to the immediacy of our concrete self in which the conscious states are experienced in duration:

Hence, there are finally two different selves, one of which is, as it were, the external projection of the other, its spatial and, so to speak, social representation. We reach the former by deep introspection, which leads us to grasp our inner states as living things, constantly *becoming*, as states not amenable to measure, which permeate one another and of which the succession in duration has nothing in-common with juxtaposition in homogeneous space. But the moments at which we thus grasp ourselves are rare, and that is just why we are rarely free. The greater part of the time we live outside ourselves, hardly perceiving anything of ourselves but our own ghost, a colourless shadow which pure duration projects into homogeneous space. Hence our life unfolds in space rather than in time; we live for the external world rather than for ourselves; we speak rather than think; we "are acted" rather than act ourselves. To act freely is to recover possession of oneself, and to get back into pure duration. (Bergson, 2001, pp.231-232)

Within its communication with the external world, the self effuses in space and becomes subject to the spatial composition of the external world. In this limited impersonal realm, it exists outside its real nature unfolded in the flux of duration. In this context, what Bergson argues is that the acts of this discontinuous and impersonal self ultimately take place in a pre-determined mechanical order, and the choices it makes depend on what this order imposes. Under the lifeless mental states that are separated from each other by being juxtaposed in a homogeneous time, this self cannot display a peculiar attitude in its acts. Thus, on the account of the deeper self, Bouton announces that "spatialization is both the condition of action, destined to find its way into the world, and what hides, betrays the author of the action, the profound ego" (Bouton, 2014, p.198). On the contrary, by being independent of spatial establishments, free acts manifest the uniqueness of the self as they originate from the self's own inner dynamism in which the states of consciousness are heterogeneously interconnected in a very unique way:

True freedom consists neither in the relation of the act with what might have been nor in a deliberative oscillation between two possibilities; it corresponds to a certain quality of action, inasmuch as the latter expresses the entire personality of the individual, and follows from the pure spontaneity of its duration. (Bouton, 2014, pp.194-195)

With the effort of intuitive thinking, the self can seize its concrete existence and immediate experience of life in which its whole personality resides. In this light, for Bergson, freedom is hidden in the fundamental self, and it presents its true meaning, that is, its spontaneity in duration as a matter of self-creation.

### **3.4. Freedom: Self-Creation**

Duration is a dynamic temporality that spontaneously creates itself by itself without having any fixed form. In other words, it has a self-generated inner dynamism that constantly renews itself. According to Bergson, this living time is the source of freedom in the sense that freedom stands for creation on account of duration. For him, what the self experiences in duration is not the modes of time running in a straight line, but itself that is constructed anew each moment by its penetrated states of consciousness, namely, ceaseless growth of inner life. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson emphasizes this reality to illustrate the character of freedom in terms of creation. He likens the concrete relationship between duration and self to the relationship between an artist and her work:

Even so with regard to the moments of our life, of which we are the artisans, each of them is a kind of creation. And just as the talent of the painter is formed or deformed in any case, is modified under the very influence of the works he produces, so each of our states, at the moment of its issue, modifies our personality, being indeed the new form that we are just assuming. It is then right to say that what we do depends on what we are; but it is necessary to add also that we are, to a certain extent, what we do, and that we are creating ourselves continually. (Bergson, 1944, p.9)

His formulation of freedom as self-creation assumes a strong connection with the notion of duration. That is to say, what he emphasizes in characterizing duration reveals the creative aspect of freedom. At the outset, our duration does not consist of

the instants that substitute each other and always bring the present into existence. If this were so, there would be no evolution and continuity in life. Yet, “duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances” (Bergson, 1944, p.7). Thus, in duration, by being maintained in the present, the past continually participates in the future. In that regard, the past wholly manifests itself in the tendencies of the self in the sense that the self concretely feels the entire past in its wills, wishes, and actions. This perpetuation of the past causes consciousness to experience the same state only once. Even if the conditions are the same, the self is not affected by them in the same way because in the dynamic structure of duration each moment is a reconstitution of the self’s history. For this reason, duration is irreversible and unforeseeable. It discloses itself in its constant change:

Our personality, which is being built up each instant with its accumulated experience, changes without ceasing. By changing, it prevents any state, although superficially identical with another, from ever repeating it in its very depth. That is why our duration is irreversible. We could not live over again a single moment, for we should have to begin by effacing the memory of all that had followed. Even could we erase this memory from our intellect, we could not from our will. (Bergson, 1944, p.8)

Herein, Bergson defends that the reason why freedom cannot be handled in an abstract way comes from the self-modifying character of duration. Insofar as each moment of duration is a new moment, the reasons of the acts of the self are not the same reasons. They do not belong to the same person as the self internally changes and they do not stem from the same moment as the moment internally changes. In this sense, they cannot be figured out from the outside as in the case of analysis, rather they can be intuited from within since each of them exists in its own uniqueness. Thus, “for a conscious being, to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly” (Bergson, 1944, p.10).

Duration is a lived reality that is never complete and never predictable. According to Bergson, its unpredictability is tantamount to its being a creative process. The novelty and peculiarity of free acts are born out of this very nature of duration. All the states of mind, that is, feelings, sensations, ideas compose qualitative integrity in

duration. This organic whole expresses the whole personality of the self from which the free acts are created. Regarding this, Bergson states that this creation is unforeseen as well as spontaneous in the sense that each act qualitatively differs from the other in the progression or succession of duration. To underline this issue, Bergson gives an example of the painting process:

The painter is before his canvas, the colors are on the palette, the model is sitting all this we see, and also we know the painter's style: do we foresee what will appear on the canvas? We possess the elements of the problem; we know in an abstract way, how it will be solved, for the portrait will surely resemble the model and will surely resemble also the artist; but the concrete solution brings with it that unforeseeable nothing which is everything in a work of art. And it is this nothing that takes time. Naught as matter, it creates itself as form. (Bergson, 1944, p.370)

The self spontaneously creates its future in its free acts, just as an artist creates her work. As this creativity springs from the deepness of the soul, time is neither an attachment nor a space that can be abbreviated or extended in this process. That is, time cannot be abstracted from the content of the process of creation. In this sense, the duration of the work of an artist is a component of her work, and “to contract or to dilate it would be to modify both the psychological evolution that fills it and the invention which is its goal” (Bergson, 1944, p.370). Here, Bergson affirms that duration is itself an invention in the sense that it takes its form as it changes in its progression. Thus, like a work of art, the creativity of the self is “a vital process, something like the ripening of the idea” (Bergson, 1944, p.370).

As previously agreed, in its freedom, the self participates in its duration in which interfused states of consciousness surpass themselves and form a genuine unity at each moment. In this context, Kebede affirms the relationship between duration and freedom in terms of self-overcoming to posit Bergson's theory of freedom beyond free will and determinism. He stresses that the growth of duration is an inner expansion that implies being capable of overcoming itself, “internal metamorphosis or self-change” (Kebede, 2019, p.73). Regarding this, he identifies Bergson's notion of freedom with self-creation by stressing the creative process of duration:

The belief that everything is already given, determined, Bergson argues, entails that time is and means nothing. What this means is that, under pain of making no sense, the fact that I am a temporal being implies my freedom. If my life is already finished, already decided, its duration is an illusion because it accomplishes nothing. But is such an absence of accomplishment a fact of life? Unlike the spatialized time, in merging one moment into the next moment, duration launches a cumulative, creative process, that is, a process that cannot be assimilated to a merely unfolding movement. (Kebede, 2019, p.75)

In this sense, in correlation with duration, self-creation means the continual venture of the self to go beyond its settled or achieved limits. This self-overcoming exactly complies with the nature of duration whose inner dynamism, with a continual recurrence, transcends what is already reached. According to Kebede, this self-surpassing dynamism of the self endorses that “freedom is a direct derivation of duration, of the prolongation of the past into a condensed present and the subsequent generation of novelty” (Kebede, 2019, p.80).

By identifying freedom with duration, Bergson, on the one hand, signifies the notion of self-creation, on the other hand, affirms the true meaning of freedom away from the stereotypes put forward by the arguments of free will and determinism. Likewise, in order to explicate freedom in terms of authentic creation, in “Time, Memory and Creativity”, Micheal Kelly describes Bergson’s understanding of freedom as a refusal of determinism and indeterminism. He notices that determinism and its opponents do not have any guarantee when time is considered as duration apart from its being a homogeneous medium. On this ground, for Kelly, with the notion of duration, Bergson does not solely highlight the true nature of time as opposed to scientific time, rather he confirms “the uniqueness and freedom of individual of human being” (Kelly, 2019, p.490). In this respect, as Kelly agrees, Bergson’s affirmation of duration illuminates an existential appeal which reveals the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity. The continual participation of the past in the present and future is the nature of conscious life in which temporality is concretely experienced by the deeper self as its own in an original way. In this harmonious blend of the past, present, and future, “the self is not a bundle of juxtaposed instants or impressions but moments that interpenetrate, incorporate, and move on, then there

are no discrete elements juxtaposed to one another in the self as lived” (Kelly, 2019, p.490). Thus, this concrete living self authentically creates itself out of duration. Here, Kelly specifies Bergson’s notion of the fundamental self as an authentic self in terms of its relation to duration from which freedom, that is, self-creation arises. He evaluates Bergson’s emphasis on the irreversible peculiar moments, in which the substantial decisions are taken, as an existential appeal that implies the third way between the determinism and deliberation which “goes beyond the cold, abstracted ‘philosophical’ or ‘theoretical’ demonstration for or against freedom” (Kelly, 2019, p.492). Therefore, by associating creativity with the authenticity, Kelly signifies the existential sense of Bergsonian freedom in order to characterize it as uniqueness. Admittedly, the superficial self is inauthentic in the sense that its acts do not originate from its unique inner whole, rather they are “oriented by and toward adaptive needs and social-practical life” (Kelly, 2019, p.491). In this context, he denotes that Bergson’s dismissal of determinism and free will is based on their confusion of real time with its spatial projection which introduces cause-and-effect relations, hence, conceals the real character of freedom, that is, the authentic creativity.

Duration is the term that refers to the creative process of life. As being an indivisible and continual flow that is always in the process of becoming, life itself inherits duration. In fact, for Bergson, to live means to exist in this self-creating flow, and in the case of freedom, we immediately experience this concrete existence. Kebede clarifies the issue by describing duration as “oriented toward creativity in the very sense of liberating and continuing the creativity of life” (Kebede, 2019, p.82). Therefore, freedom means the realization of self-achievement by being a part of the power of life, that is, self-creation. In that regard, in accordance with Campbell Garnett’s formulation of the positive sense of freedom in terms of creativity, duration as being a living time stands for the “value character of the creative process that gives its general value character to freedom” (Garnett, 1960-1961, p.27). That is to say, from Garnett’s standpoint, freedom in Bergson signifies more than its negative sense that means breaking away from restricted circumstances. It is further “a

freedom of the creative impulse within the self to find its own expression” (Garnett, 1960-1961, p.31). From this perspective, along with the dualities he establishes between duration and space, the fundamental self and the superficial self, Bergson’s articulation of freedom allows him to privilege the flow of life as an inventive evolutionary movement in which the self coincides with its creativity.

### **3.5. Evolution and Freedom: The Creativity of Life**

In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson’s examination of life through evolution exposes the connection between freedom and duration. With the notion of duration, Bergson does not present us only a theory of time but also demonstrates the essence of life which points to dynamism and creativity. In this respect, Paola Marrati describes duration beyond the psychological aspect to elucidate the relationship between the universe and creation:

The universe, like ourselves, like the systems we isolate, is in duration. The continuity of change, which defines duration, is not a subjective experience of time, a merely psychic dimension; it is the ontological nature, if we can use this term, of the universe. Bergson's claim that "time is nothing if it does nothing" now takes on its full sense. The universe coincides with duration, that is to say, with the invention, or the creation of the new. The power of time, its own agency, is the open-ended possibility of the emergence of radical novelty. (Marrati, 2005, p.1104)

In this context, according to Bergson, by coinciding with duration, to live means to be a part of the continuous flow of life in which the evolutionary movement allows for a continual process of becoming. Hence, he asserts that as being always in a process of becoming anew, life is itself an incessant invention. In this dynamism, evolution is the permanence of the change as it “implies a real persistence of the past in the present, a duration which is, as it were, a hyphen, a connecting link” (Bergson, 1944, p.27). Thus, for Bergson, to live or to be a living being is to be subject to the productive activity of life in which the states are not juxtaposed, but are interpenetrated to each other in a pure successive way. Like in our consciousness, there are no clear-cut distinctions in the process of life. The creativity of life comes

from the fact that it is an evolutionary movement that includes qualitative changes. That is to say, by dealing with evolution over duration, Bergson remarks that the evolutionary process does not always proceed forward on a homogeneous line by succeeding the previous step. However, it takes effort to find the right path by going through winding routes. This process, which requires an effort for new formations, is prompted endlessly by a connatural and creative tendency. On this ground, Kolakowski signifies the creativity of life through evolution progressing with qualitative changes:

Life, like our consciousness, is infinitely creative and inventive, incessantly producing new forms; it is a movement that must struggle with the resistance of inert matter and have recourse to all sorts of tricks in order to use matter for purposes which are foreign to it. Each new species is, as it were, a solution to a problem; there is nothing astonishing in the fact that some solutions prove to be wrong and are later abandoned. (Kolakowski, 1985, pp.55-56)

In this framework, it can be articulated that with the emphasis on the nonlinear movement of evolution, Bergson conceives life as an organic process that proceeds by cleavage and disassociation. The inner dynamism of life does not unfold itself mechanically but as a creative process because it is a tendency, “and the essence of a tendency is to develop in the form of a sheaf, creating, by its very growth, divergent directions among which its impetus is divided” (Bergson, 1944, p. 110). Life, then, is a continual process of becoming in which the original impetus, that is, life-drive splits itself into diverse forms to produce greater variations of them. Bergson calls this original drive *élan vital* which constitutes “the general movement of life, which on divergent lines is creating forms ever new” (Bergson, 1944, p.112). The life-drive is inherited in all organisms because life maintains all tendencies and “creates with them diverging series of species that will evolve separately” (Bergson, 1944, p.111). In this sense, according to Bergson, the original impetus stands for an “internal push that has carried life, by more and more complex forms, to higher and higher destinies” (Bergson, 1944, p.113). Accordingly, Deleuze affirms that the notion of *élan vital* implies a force that drives the movement of life which goes along with the internal differentiation of duration:

In the most familiar examples, life is divided into plant and animal; the animal is divided into instinct and intelligence; an instinct in turn divides into several directions that are actualized in different species; intelligence itself has its particular modes or actualizations. It is as if Life were merged into the very movement of differentiation, in ramified series. (Deleuze, 1991, p.94)

Since this differentiation is not caused by external factors, the movement of life is a process of actualization that assumes “a virtual primordial totality that is dissociated according to the lines of differentiation, but that still shows its subsisting unity and totality in each line” (Deleuze 1991, p.95). Here, this totality is *élan vital* that is carried by each branching of instinct and intelligence. In this light, Deleuze argues that duration is called by Bergson life because the diverse lanes that are produced by divisions of duration and *élan vital* firmly comply with each other in the sense that we notice differences in kind in both divisions. That is to say, in both cases, the unity, that is, virtual integrity is actualized under tendencies differing in kind. He illustrates this by claiming that “at each instant pure duration divides in two directions, one of which is the past, the other the present; or else the *élan vital* at every instant separates into two movements, one of relaxation (detente) that descends into matter, the other of tension that ascends into duration” (Deleuze, 1991, p.95). To this extent, Deleuze conceives Bergson’s theory of evolution as a differentiation that refers to the actualization of the virtual that remains through its actual diverse lanes. Herein, Deleuze characterizes evolution as creative on the ground of the process of actualization. He highlights this point with the following words:

Evolution takes place from the virtual to actuals. Evolution is actualization, actualization is creation. When we speak of biological or living evolution we must therefore avoid two misconceptions: that of interpreting it in terms of the "possible" that is realized, or else interpreting it in terms of pure actuals. The first misconception obviously appears in preformism. And, contrary to preformism, evolutionism will always have the merit of reminding us that life is production, creation of differences. The whole problem is that of the nature and the causes of these differences. The vital differences or variations can certainly be conceived of as purely accidental. (Deleuze, 1991, p.98)

To clarify Deleuze’s description of *élan vital* as virtual unity, Keith Ansell-Pearson pays attention to its contrast with possibility. For him, the notion of possibility is restricted to enclosed systems whereas the notion of virtual applies to the movement

of life, which refers to an open system, to illuminate its dynamic feature. In this sense, he notices that to conceive evolution in terms of the realization of possibles removes any creativity in the course of evolution. When the outcomes of evolution are regarded as pre-given in the mode of pre-existing possibles, “the actual process of evolution is being treated as a pure mechanism that simply adds existence to something that already had being in the form of a possible” (Pearson, 2002, p.72). On the contrary, as Pearson agrees, the case is different in Bergson’s understanding of the virtual in the sense that “the process of differentiation does not proceed in terms of resemblance or limitation but rather in terms of divergent lines that require a process of invention” (Pearson, 2002, p.72).

On this account, in parallel with Bergson’s distinction between duration and spatial time, we can understand that the flow of life in terms of the process of actualization cannot be grasped by our intellect. Like duration, life is a dynamic process of creation; it is neither static nor created. Therefore, evolution as a continuous movement of life does not take place in a homogeneous time. Our intellect is also a part of this movement since it has evolved as praxis to be in harmony with the order of the world. However, by engaging in the material world, it takes the form to work mechanically. This means that under the act of associating and adding, it transforms what is dynamic into static, hence, translates the flow of life to the system of mechanism. Utilizing concepts and artificial isolations, the intellect only deals with differences in degree through mechanistic explanations. In that regard, as Pearson suggests, mechanism stands for “a reflection of our evolved habits of representation rather than an adequate reflection of nature itself” since it presents us only a fractional picture of reality and “neglects other crucial aspects such as duration” (Pearson, 2002, p.74). For instance, intelligence does not take into account transition but perceives motion “as a movement through space, as a series of positions in which one point is reached, followed by another, and so on” (Pearson, 2002, p.74). In parallel, Bergson affirms that mechanism that works with the intellect fails to elucidate the true nature of life, thus, evolution because it considers things as if they consist in the present:

The mechanistic explanations, we said, hold good for the systems that our thought artificially detaches from the whole. But of the whole itself and of the systems which, within this whole, seem to take after it, we cannot admit a priori that they are mechanically explicable, for then time would be useless, and even unreal. The essence of mechanical explanation, in fact, is to regard the future and the past as calculable functions of the present, and thus to claim that all is given. On this hypothesis, past, present and future would be open at a glance to a superhuman intellect capable of making the calculation. (Bergson, 1944, p.43)

To demonstrate the linkage between duration and evolution in terms of creativity, Bergson stresses that neither the mechanistic (Neo-Darwinian) nor the finalistic (Neo-Lamarckian) theories of evolution are capable to explain succession among species. For him, both theories inevitably fall into the same error in their attempt to understand evolution. On the one hand, neo-Darwinism relies upon a mechanistic view that interprets evolution through external causes based on pre-given agents. On the other hand, neo-Lamarckism relies upon a finalistic view, that is, a teleological explanation of the succession of life forms. In this sense, for Bergson, in both cases, the creative character of evolution and the true nature of time are ignored because both theories assume that evolution occurs through constructing ready-made forms. By engaging only in the present, mechanistic and finalistic accounts reduce the succession among species to a sheer appearance; the disclosure of a pre-determined program, or the accomplishment of pre-established finality. Finalism is the inversed version of mechanism since “it substitutes the attraction of the future for the impulsion of the past” (Bergson, 1944, p.45). However, evolution is a creation perpetually regenerated without taking into account any ultimate purpose:

To speak of an end is to think of a preexisting model which has only to be realized. It is to suppose, therefore, that all is given, and that the future can be read in the present. It is to believe that life, in its movement and in its entirety, goes to work like our intellect, which is only a motionless and fragmentary view of life, and which naturally takes its stand outside of time. Life, on the contrary, progresses and endures in time. (Bergson, 1944, p.58)

Actually, by criticizing the mechanistic and finalistic theories of evolution, Bergson attempts to demonstrate that creative evolution differs from these views in the sense that it has an original impetus that spreads through alternate routes of growth. The

similarities between species can be explained by the dispersed movement of life. He remarkably clarifies this by stating that animals and some sort of plants independently reproduce their own kind of sexual fertilization under different environmental conditions. Thus, it is not true to say that their common development of sexual elements comes from an adaptation to a joint external circumstance:

Yet vegetables and animals have evolved on independent lines, favored by unlike circumstances, opposed by unlike obstacles. Here are two great series which have gone on diverging. On either line, thousands and thousands of causes have combined to determine the morphological and functional evolution. Yet these infinitely complicated causes have been consummated, in each series, in the same effect. (Bergson, 1944, p.67)

Therefore, life unfolds itself as a creative process in duration through the division of the original drive into a developing diversity of forms. It is not like a procedure of a machine in the sense that its future route cannot be foreseen. For Deleuze, this is why differentiation or actualization refers to a real creation. The original force creates the diverse lines “according to which it is actualized and the dissimilar means that it utilizes on each line” (Deleuze, 1991, p106). This creation occurs without any goal because directions of the process “do not pre-exist ready-made, and are themselves created along with the act that runs through them” (Deleuze, 1991, p.106). In this sense, according to Bergson, this movement cannot be expressed by the theory of chance variations or adaptation since they are defective in explaining the similarities between the organs of different life forms that evolved in the course of independent lines. Moreover, they cannot explain complex organs like the eye which only functions when its elements are completely effectuated. The inheritable change in species to form a more complex organ is then related to an effort, which is free from external conditions, “common to most representatives of the same species, inherent in the germs they bear rather than in their substance alone, an effort thereby assured of being passed on to their descendants” (Bergson, 1944, p.97). Bergson here describes nothing other than the *élan vital*. It can be figured out, then, in Bergson’s formulation, duration as the process of actualization is not only the characteristic of human consciousness but of life at the same time. If we more concentrate on the continuity of life, we seize that the organic process of evolution reminds “the

evolution of a consciousness, in which the past presses against the present and causes the upspringing of a new form of consciousness, incommensurable with its antecedents” (Bergson, 1944, p.32). Thus, the universe has the same nature as consciousness. Our immediate experience of time is the most concrete fact of life. As a result, in Bergson’s insight, the stream of consciousness projects the creative, inventive process of life which signifies freedom. By intuition, consciousness coincides with the great rhythm of life in which each component resides in the ceaseless process of becoming. Freedom denotes the essence of life because the movement of life is a free act that always creates the new without being directed towards a purpose and without repeating itself:

When we put back our being into our will, and our will itself into the impulsion it prolongs, we understand, we feel, that reality is a perpetual growth, a creation pursued without end. Our will already performs this miracle. Every human work in which there is invention, every voluntary act in which there is freedom, every movement of an organism that manifests spontaneity, brings something new into the world. (Bergson, 1944, p.261)

After all, as being the central idea of his philosophy, freedom is associated with the process of creation in Bergson. I argue that his emphasis on immanency discloses this fundamental theme. The evolutionary movement stands for the actualization of virtual unity, that is, original impetus. Through this process of actualization, the life-drive becomes immanent to all life forms. Consciousness, as participating in the evolutionary movement, coincides with the process of creation and the self is free when its acts stem from duration that refers to genuine flow of life. To this extend, “creation, so conceived, is not a mystery; we experience it in ourselves when we act freely” (Bergson, 1944, p.271).

In brief, the notion of freedom in Bergson’s philosophy of life discloses the self’s immediate connection with life in terms of creativity. His theory of duration allows us to radically characterize freedom as self-creation beyond determinism and free will debate. By participating in the flux of duration, the self creates itself out of its inner dynamism. When we eliminate the spatial understanding of time, the arguments for determinism and free will become groundless. In contrast to the superficial self

attached to the causal order of the external world, the fundamental self participates in the process of becoming in which conscious states are always intertwined in a new formation in line with the dynamic flow of life. That is to say, to be free means to create oneself in harmony with life's power of self-generation.

## CHAPTER 4

### SARTRE'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY: ON THE WAY TO FREEDOM

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre follows a phenomenological method to present his ontological account that endorses absolute freedom. Precisely speaking, the existential sense of freedom in Sartre originates from his ontological scheme which is based on the phenomenological approach. Investigation of being by observing and describing the phenomena leads to the two manners of being, namely, being-in-itself and being-for-itself. On the one side, being-in-itself is the ground of the existence of the phenomenon as it designates the being of the objects of consciousness which “cannot be subject to the phenomenal condition” therefore “surpasses the knowledge which we have of it and provides the basis for such knowledge” (Sartre, 1978, p.1). On the other side, according to Sartre, being-for-itself signifies the being of consciousness in the sense that consciousness’ existential root is always to be for itself. As understood in this way, Sartre’s ontology asserts two distinct regions of being which imply the irreducibility of the being of phenomena. In this context, the issue of the irreducibility of being-in-itself reveals two important points where Sartre’s ontological argument is connected to his theory of consciousness and freedom. In the first place, being-in-itself is what it is, identical to itself, and has a static structure because it has “no *within* which is opposed to a *without* and which is analogous to a judgment, a law, a consciousness of itself” (Sartre, 1978, p.1xvi). Thus, it has “nothing secret; it is solid (*massif*)” by being “the synthesis of itself with itself” (Sartre, 1978, p.1xvi). As it is always transcendent to consciousness, it is indifferent to the intentional acts of consciousness. Secondly, on the contrary, being-for-itself involves a dynamic structure since it exists as an act directed towards things. Because consciousness is always the consciousness of objects, its existence depends on objects and its activity stands for an intention toward a thing that is other

than itself. In this activity, by introducing negation to being, consciousness evermore transcends being-in-itself, therefore, constitutes its existence through nihilation. That is to say, consciousness as being-for-itself “has to be its own being, it is never sustained by being; it sustains being in the heart of subjectivity, which means once again that it is inhabited by being but that it is not being: consciousness is not what it is” (Sartre, 1978, p.62). Accordingly, in this chapter, I will concentrate on these crucial points which are able to clarify the very structure of being-for-itself. In order to demonstrate how this ontological layout illuminates Sartre’s understanding of radical freedom in terms of self-creation, that is, self-determination, along with the emphasis on transcendence, I will scrutinize the relationship between intentionality and consciousness. Further, I will attentively dwell on Sartre’s notion of ego to explicate in what respect the connection between consciousness and ego contributes to the existential meaning of freedom. Then, as Sartre considers being-for-Others as a dimension of being-for-itself, I will analyze what does it mean the look of the Other in his phenomenology. In this regard, this chapter will provide a background to understand Sartre’s notion of temporality in its relation to freedom which will be referred to in the next chapter. In addition, with the emphasis on being-for-Others, it will give us an insight to grasp Sartre’s existentialism in the context of being-in-the-world.

#### **4.1. The Ontological Structure of Being-for-itself**

Sartre’s analysis of the phenomenon in the introduction to *Being and Nothingness*, sets forth the trans-phenomenal being of the phenomenon, which he calls being-in-itself, in terms of the irreducibility of being. For Sartre, the being of the phenomena cannot be totally disclosed to consciousness. The reason behind this is not that it conceals its very nature; rather, it displays itself in the sequences of its various appearances. However, by bearing to understand the being, consciousness inclines to reveal the complete being-in-itself for the sake of the ground of meaning:

We must understand that this being is no other than the transphenomenal being of phenomena and not a noumenal being which is hidden behind them. It is the being of this table, of this package of tobacco, of the lamp, more generally the being of the world which is implied by consciousness. It requires simply that the being of that which appears does not exist only in so far as it appears. The transphenomenal being of what exists for consciousness is itself in itself. (Sartre, 1978, p.1xii)

In this context, with this principal elucidation, by focusing on the structure of lived experience, Sartre proposes the ontological description in which he understands being in two modes, that is, being-in-itself and being-for-itself. As existing beyond the phenomenological experience of consciousness, being-in-itself cannot be defined more than as being what it is. In other words, as Daigle clarifies, “what is unveiled through our conscious grasp of being is a world supported by being, of which we can say nothing but that it is” (Daigle, 2010, p.32). In this sense, Sartre characterizes being-in-itself as an inert existence that is ever complete and identical to itself. “It is full positivity. It knows no otherness; it never posits itself as other-than-another-being” (Sartre, 1978, p.1xvi). It is filled with itself without having any deficit or change; it is a self-sufficient being that is not affected by the world of differentiation, such as time, space, and categories. But, as Daigle states, they all stand for consciousness since “it is consciousness that introduces such distinctions, and thus generates a world” (Daigle, 2010, p.33). That is to say, being-in-itself is a brute existence that requires the activity of consciousness to be meaningful insofar as “consciousness can always pass beyond the existent, not toward its being, but toward the meaning of this being” (Sartre, 1978, p.1xiii). According to Sartre, this does not mean that being-in-itself needs consciousness to reveal itself; rather, as it is transphenomenal, the being of the phenomenon is a field of being that is indifferent to the interests and orientations of consciousness. It is the condition of the series in which phenomena appear, thence, it is totally independent of consciousness:

It is true that things give themselves in profile; that is, simply by appearances. And it is true that each appearance refers to other appearances. But each of them is already in itself alone a transcendent being, not a subjective material of impressions -a plenitude of being, not a lack-a presence, not an absence. (Sartre, 1978, p.1xi)

In Sartre's approach, the nature of being-in-itself reveals the most fundamental structure of being-for-itself. In contrast to the self-identical reality of being-in-itself, being-for-itself is the mode of being that never coincides with itself. It has a lack of being in the sense that it always exists as separated from itself. Hence, it is neither complete nor self-sustained. In this respect, Sartre defines this mode of existence as a "being what it is not and not being what it is" and "has to be what it is" (Sartre, 1978, p.1xv). As an experiencing existence, this characterization of being-for-itself signifies the nature of consciousness because for consciousness to experience means to be involved in a kind of dynamism in which consciousness always transcends its being. In experience, it moves beyond the fact that it is. Unlike being-in-itself, that is, non-experiencing material objects, while experiencing, consciousness questions the world and dissociates itself from the circumstances of the world to approve or disapprove them. As it stems from this dynamic structure of consciousness, according to Sartre, human beings are all the time self-transcending. That is to say, as Linsenbard points out, human beings "may always go beyond the present and hurl themselves into a future of unlimited possibilities" (Linsenbard, 2010, p.37). In this articulation, lies Sartre's ontological argument in terms of the ground of being. Within its experience, the awareness of consciousness implies the manner of being-for-itself. In other words, the trans-phenomenal being of consciousness is being-for-itself because consciousness always exists as consciousness of something. In this context, consciousness is an activity of intending through the world of experience. It is an intention toward a thing that is other than itself. To become aware of the object, it is always transcending the other. Here, the principle point which Sartre employs to construct his ontological argument is the otherness, that is, the reality of being-in-itself. If there were no being-in-itself which is unconditionally indifferent to our human concerns, there would be no consciousness of the other, thus, no consciousness that is always in pursuit of its own existence. In this way, Sartre asserts that the phenomenon reveals its own being as well as the being of consciousness:

Consciousness is consciousness of something. This means that transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness; that is, that consciousness is

born supported by a being which is not itself... To say that consciousness is consciousness of something is to say that it must produce itself as a revealed-revelation of a being which is not it and which gives itself as already existing when consciousness reveals it. (Sartre, 1978, p.1xii)

Accordingly, by separating consciousness from being-in-itself, Sartre specifies consciousness as nothingness (no-thing-ness), that is, as a mode of being “of which the property is to nihilate Nothingness, to support it in its being, to sustain it perpetually in its very existence, a being by which nothingness comes to things” (Sartre, 1978, p.22). The activity of consciousness is dependent on being-in-itself, however, it is not itself a being insofar as it establishes a connection with the being, namely, the world through the process of negation. This process, for Sartre, refers to a nihilating activity of consciousness by which the phenomenal world is revealed as standing against consciousness. Because consciousness is this dynamic activity, there is no any fixed point inhabited in consciousness; it is basically nothing. Through negating, consciousness brings determinations to the world and this process assumes a being whose being is nothing. By referring to temporality, Daigle illuminates this point as follows:

Because consciousness is this nothingness, which introduces negation in the world, the for-itself comes to be defined as the being that has to be what it is not. It is not fully itself, and this distance from itself allows it to form projects as well as to be free from determinations, i.e. to move ahead in the future as what it is not, by denying the past. (Daigle, 2010, p.34)

Therefore, in the existential ground of being-for-itself, there lies the refusing act which implies a divergence from being. With this separation, that is, nihilating activity, being-for-itself gains its existence. As understood in this way, Sartre states that any awareness of an object is an act of upsurge which comes from consciousness’ power of nihilation. In this context, Sartre’s characterization of consciousness as nothingness indicates the concrete relationship between being-in-itself and being-for-itself, that is, “an essential relation of human reality to the world” (Sartre, 1978, p.24) since nothingness is a way of our being in the world. Anything that is being-in-itself is connected to the rest of the being-in-itself by a set of causal relations. Because it is nothingness, consciousness takes out itself from these causal

sequences and withdraws from the world of objects. Hence, the for-itself experiences the world in and through the act of separation. This nihilating process allows the world of phenomena to be disclosed in a certain way, and brings forth the possibility for it to be modified:

In order for the totality of being to order itself around us as instruments, in order for it to parcel itself into differentiated complexes which refer one to another and which can be used, it is necessary that negation rise up not as a thing among other things but as the rubric of a category which presides over the arrangement and the redistribution of great masses of being in things. Thus the rise of man in the midst of the being which "invests" him causes a world to be discovered. But the essential and primordial moment of this rise is the negation. (Sartre, 1978, p.24)

Regarding this, in the first part of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre aims to demonstrate that negation originates from nothingness to highlight the ontological structure of being-for-itself. For him, negation cannot be reduced to judgment or thought. Due to its irreducibility to the function of judgments, that is, the way we understand the world, it is not subjective; rather it is objective in the sense that it is a transcendent object of consciousness. That is to say, negation has its own quality. At this point, Sartre offers an example of Pierre's absence at the café to explicate whether there is "an intuition of Pierre's absence, or does negation indeed enter in only with judgment" (Sartre, 1978, p.9). When I come to the café with the expectation of seeing Pierre, along with its full being, the café presents itself to me as an organized background in line with my attention. Since I expect to encounter Pierre, the objects in the café are entirely formed themselves, in a special way, as a ground for the appearance of Pierre. According to him, this mere setting of the café stands for an original nihilation which is given to my intuition in the sense that each component of the café "attempts to isolate itself, to lift itself upon the ground constituted by the totality of the other objects, only to fall back once more into the undifferentiation of this ground; it melts into the ground" (Sartre, 1978, pp.9-10). In this way, the first nihilation arises out of the café's organization of itself as a background in the sense of not focusing on it to find Pierre. When Pierre fails to emerge against that background, the second nihilation shows up as "it is Pierre raising himself as

nothingness on the ground of the nihilation of the café” (Sartre, 1978, p.10). In this context, the non-being of Pierre appears to me in a pre-judgmental, that is, non-conceptual way. I explore Pierre’s absence through the synthetic relationship between my expectation to see him and the background of the café in which I turn my attention to find him. Therefore, in Sartre’s account, to say that ‘Pierre is not here’ or ‘Pierre is absent’ does not only refer to a negative judgment. It is not my judgment that introduces the negation. However, the absence of Pierre is concretely given to me as in the world, as an objective fact since it “haunts this café and is the condition of its self nihilating organization as ground” (Sartre, 1978, p.10). Hence, for Sartre, non-being or nothingness precedes negative judgments. Negative facts are real events in the world and we discover their ontological reality by concretely experiencing them. Under its power of nothingness, consciousness posits Pierre as an absent object in the way in which it intends Pierre as absent. In this context, by becoming a transcendent object of consciousness, Pierre’s absence is made a fact; his absence is present. Therefore, according to Sartre, as being a concrete instance between consciousness and phenomena, negation assumes human reality, that is, the relation of consciousness to the world. By recognizing negation as a concrete fact that springs from the very nature of consciousness, that is, nothingness, Sartre denies that it is subjective because of the fact that it is not a function of our thinking:

Negation is an abrupt break in continuity which cannot in any case result from prior affirmations; it is an original and irreducible event. Here we are in the realm of consciousness. Consciousness moreover cannot produce a negation except in the form of consciousness of negation. No category can "inhabit" consciousness and reside there in the manner of a thing. (Sartre, 1978, p.11)

Here, Sartre remarks that non-being is not a matter of conceptuality or judgment. Negation is necessary for a negative judgment to be established. For instance, in order to posit a’s difference from b, consciousness brings limitations in being. In the same manner, in order to judge that something is b or there is b, consciousness initially negates everything else that is not b. In that regard, all discrimination requires negation and negation originates from nothingness.

To demonstrate the constitutive character of nothingness in experience, by focusing on destruction, Sartre affirms that “man is the only being by whom destruction can be accomplished” (Sartre, 1978, p.8). Without an observer, geological events, for example, a storm cannot be attributed as a destroyer of nature. With its full positivity, there is only being-in-itself that exists after the storm as before. In fact, for Sartre, it is also inaccurate to posit before and after without a witness who can keep in mind the past and contrast it with the present. This is to say, only for an experiencing being, the storm means destruction. Sartre explains this with the following words:

If a cyclone can bring about the death of certain living beings, this death will be destruction only if it is experienced as such. In order for destruction to exist, there must be first a relation of man to being i.e., a transcendence; and within the limits of this relation, it is necessary that man apprehend one being as destructible. This supposes a limiting cutting into being by a being, which, as we saw in connection with truth, is already a process of nihilation. (Sartre, 1978, p.8)

As stated above, since being-in-itself is what it is and has no lack in its reality, nothingness cannot arise from it; rather “the being by which Nothingness comes to the world must be its own Nothingness” (Sartre, 1978, p.23). He underlines this crucial point with an emphasis on the question. For him, consciousness needs to have a different mode of being than the being of the question in order to raise a question. In other words, consciousness needs to take a distance from itself and from the world to ask a question. In this sense, the question stands for a “human attitude filled with meaning” (Sartre, 1978, p.4). Therefore, for Sartre, the question is possible on the condition of being detached from the world of phenomena in the sense that the questioner must separate itself from the causal order which forms being. By virtue of the ability to disassociate herself from the causal chain, the questioner draws away from universal determinism and gives way for a question to arise. That is to say:

In every question we stand before a being which we are questioning. Every question presupposes a being who questions and a being which is questioned. This is not the original relation of man to being-in-itself, but rather it stands within the limitations of this relation and takes it for granted. On the other hand, this being which we question, we question about something. That about which I question the being participates in the transcendence of being. (Sartre, 1978, p.4)

It is, then, consciousness' concrete nothingness that allows for an ontological gap, the real distance, between being-in-itself and the questioner to make possible asking a question. As understood in this way, the questioner would belong to the continual line of causal series, which indicates the fullness of being, if it would not introduce negation which comes from its nothingness. Hence, as Catalano pays attention, "in questioning, the questioner wrenches from being its continuity with itself, thereby 'nihilating' being in relation to other aspects of being" (Catalano, 1985, p.66). For instance, for there to be a question of 'what is a rock', the rock should be negated from the wholeness of being-in-itself for the sake of its questionability as a discrete entity. Further, in this question, consciousness should negate itself to be aware of the rock:

Thus in so far as the questioner must be able to effect in relation to the questioned a kind of nihilating withdrawal, he is not subject to the causal order of the world; he detaches himself from Being. This means that by a double movement of nihilation, he nihilates the thing questioned in relation to himself by placing it in a neutral state, between being and non-being and that he nihilates himself in relation to the thing questioned by wrenching himself from being in order to be able to bring out of himself the possibility of a non-being. Thus in posing a question, a certain negative element is introduced into the world. We see nothingness making the world iridescent, casting a shimmer over things. (Sartre, 1978, p.23)

In this framework, consciousness' power of self-distancing signifies freedom in the sense that Sartre leads to identify nothingness as freedom. The analysis of ontology from a phenomenological perspective indicates that freedom is not a quality of consciousness, therefore, not a property of human reality. Precisely speaking, freedom and consciousness cannot be distinguished from each other. To clarify this significant point in a better way, in the fifth chapter of this study, I will discuss the relationship between nothingness and freedom under Sartre's emphasis on the original temporality. Before that, to understand Sartre's ontology more clearly, I need to explore the notion of intentionality, its connection with consciousness, and the status of the ego.

## 4.2. Intentionality and Consciousness

One of the central themes of Sartre's phenomenological ontology is intentionality. In Sartre's account, intentionality means directedness towards the world. It is an act of consciousness toward a thing that is other than itself. Because consciousness exists as nothingness, it is necessarily empty, that is, it does not include any content; it is nothing else than this direction. In other words, it always exists as being the consciousness of an object. To this extent, by introducing intentionality as an act of consciousness, Sartre underscores his ontological argument in terms of irreducibility. For him, the phenomena have an independent status that cannot be affected by consciousness. Likewise, consciousness cannot be determined by the phenomena. In this regard, according to Sartre, the world of objects does not stand for mental images or representations in the sense that they cannot be degraded to states of consciousness. Contrarily, objects are transcendent to consciousness, and, in the act of intention, consciousness tries to relate itself to the existence of beings, that is, objects:

A table is not in consciousness - not even in the capacity of a representation. A table is in space, beside the window, etc. The existence of the table in fact is a center of opacity for consciousness; it would require an infinite process to inventory the total contents of a thing. To introduce this opacity into consciousness would be to refer to infinity the inventory which it can make of itself, to make consciousness a thing, and to deny the cogito. The first procedure of a philosophy ought to be to expel things from consciousness and to reestablish its true connection with the world, to know that consciousness is a positional consciousness of the world. All consciousness is positional in that it transcends itself in order to reach an object and it exhausts itself in this same positing. (Sartre, 1978, p.1i)

Here, according to Levy, Sartre notably eliminates the prevailing view of French epistemology which accepts that "to know something was to draw it into consciousness, a process whereby the known thing was incorporated into the knowing subject, so that the two ended up of the same substance" (Levy, 2002, p.5). By declaring that consciousness is intentional, Sartre points out the fundamental difference between the manner of being-in-itself and being of consciousness. Because consciousness exists as always conscious of the world, in return, the world

notifies consciousness that it is not being-in-itself. In this context, the thesis of intentionality allows Sartre to posit the existence of the world of phenomena outside of consciousness. What is principal is the world as existing there to be figured out by consciousness. In this sense, to articulate the notion of intentionality, Daigle suggests that “consciousness does not create the world ex nihilo, i.e. from nothing, but rather creates what is already there by interpreting it” (Daigle, 2010, p.21). Through living, meaning, and choosing, consciousness always attempts to relate itself to the world. As a result of this relation, consciousness borrows its existence and constructs the world as correlated to its interpretation. This removes the illusion of having objective intellectual knowledge. In that regard, for Sartre, knowledge is not representational. Instead, it is the act of making something present for me since intentionality makes something present for me. From this perspective, in Sartre’s account, ‘for me’ does not refer to an isolated individual; it is me and my world, the organic relation of my understanding and my knowledge. For this reason, by assuming the notion of intentionality, Sartre’s dualistic ontology especially ignores realism and determinism. To be more precise, Sartre’s emphasis on consciousness’ intentional activity endorses that there is no causal intercourse between the being of consciousness (directedness toward the world) and the being of phenomena. These two regions of being do not act upon each other in terms of causal interaction; rather they relate to each other within a dynamic process. By pointing to the autonomous existence of consciousness, Gardner introduces this process with the following words:

Anything that might be supposed to determine or motivate consciousness must stand in some relation to consciousness, but nothing can stand in a relation to consciousness without being its object (because consciousness is intentionality) and without there being conscious of this relation (because consciousness is pre-reflectively self-conscious); so nothing can determine consciousness from its outside (heteronomously) without being taken up and converted into consciousness' self-determination (autonomy). (Gardner, 2009, p.48)

In this light, pure intentionality signifies the autonomy and spontaneity of consciousness. Since it is a lack of content, consciousness’ intention toward the world cannot be defined as a pre-determined act. However, the activity of intention

springs from the essential power of nothingness in which consciousness brings its own determinations into the world. In that regard, by attributing spontaneity and autonomy to consciousness, Sartre attempts to illuminate that all determinations and meanings of human reality arise from the anonymous, impersonal, and free activity of consciousness. As being an impersonal spontaneity, consciousness determines its essence at each instant “without us being able to conceive of anything *before* it” (Sartre, 2004, p.27). To this extent, intentionality implies the act of self-determination in which consciousness can only be motivated or limited by itself. According to Sartre, to suppose otherwise is to “conceive that consciousness to the degree to which it is an effect, is not conscious (of) itself” (Sartre, 1978, p.1v). For him, this implies the characterization of consciousness as passive or semi-conscious. On the contrary, in its absolute spontaneity, consciousness is always conscious of itself in the sense of being conscious of a thing. It follows from this analysis that Sartre considers self-determination as a self-activated existence and fundamental reality of consciousness:

Consciousness is a plenum of existence, and this determination of itself by itself is an essential characteristic. It would even be wise not to misuse the expression "cause of self," which allows us to suppose a progression, a relation of self-cause to self-effect. It would be more exact to say very simply: The existence of consciousness comes from consciousness itself. (Sartre, 1978, p.1v)

Here, the self-activation of consciousness signifies the two crucial aspects of Sartre’s phenomenology. Firstly, by describing intentionality as a spontaneous and autonomous act of consciousness, Sartre claims that consciousness’ directedness toward the world is an immediate relation to its object, that is, something other than itself in which the concrete connection between the world and consciousness is established. Since consciousness is relational in nature, in this immediate relation, consciousness and the world do not exert a causal effect on each other. Put it differently, nothing other than itself causes consciousness to intend the object, in the same way, consciousness in its act of intention does not affect the existence of the world. All determinations arise from consciousness’ spontaneous and autonomous motivation, and consciousness comes into existence with this determining activity.

That is to say, it is not beyond or outside of this activity. Secondly, in its relational attitude, consciousness is aware of its self-activation. For Sartre, this implies that pure intentionality assumes pre-reflective cogito in the sense that consciousness is always conscious of itself as an act of intention. He also calls the pre-reflective level of consciousness as non-positional self-consciousness or non-thetic consciousness in order to emphasize that it is basically an implicit awareness of being conscious of the object. Daigle clarifies this significant point by considering the pre-reflective existence of consciousness as a non-ego-centered primordial act:

This pre-reflective consciousness is without an ego. It is not personal; it is simply consciousness that is conscious of. It is consciousness as an act: the act of being conscious, of grasping the world as opposed to consciousness as an object, like a mind or concrete brain. Sartre will therefore want to transform the classical Cartesian formula, "I think, therefore I am," and change it to "There is consciousness, therefore I am." The first "truth" that one uncovers via introspection is the fact of consciousness which is not yet an "I." (Daigle, 2010, p.21)

In this perspective, what Sartre remarks is that there is no 'I' that dwells in consciousness in the pre-reflective level. For him, consciousness' positing the object which is other than itself and grasping it are identical to each other, that is, they are "one and the same act" (Sartre, 2004, p.5). Therefore, pre-reflective consciousness is impersonal and transparent, and it is "consciousness as such knows itself only as absolute inwardness" (Sartre, 2004, p.5).

Accordingly, Sartre's formulation of pre-reflective consciousness in terms of transparency and inwardness leads him to conclude that ego is not immanent to consciousness; rather it is a transcendent object of consciousness. Indeed, along with the spontaneity of consciousness, the status of the ego remarkably portrays Sartre's phenomenological ontology from which his account of temporality and existential sense of freedom shows up. Furthermore, at the core of Sartre's criticism of Bergson lies his effort to disclose pure consciousness, that is, non-ego-centered consciousness which refers to the radicalized notion of duration. On this ground, Roland Breeur pays attention to Bergson's influence on Sartre. He admits that Sartre's emphasis on the pre-reflective consciousness "falls prey to Bergson's strategy: the reduction of

quantity to quality” (Breur, 2001, p.178). Although they develop the same strategy, for Breur, with the notion of pre-reflective consciousness, Sartre radicalizes Bergson’s theory of duration by purging consciousness of all the contents of the ego that introduce passivity and dependence:

It is not the pre-reflective organization of inner reality. The Sartrean consciousness is never in itself, and it is therefore frightened by its own spontaneity... The creative spontaneity of consciousness, in contrast to Bergson’s duration, is not continuous reorganization, but ceaseless creation, without taking into account previous achievements or acquisitions. (Breur, 2001, p.188)

Here, in order to compare Sartre’s account of consciousness with Bergson’s notion of duration, Breur attaches importance to the pre-reflective mode that entails the nothingness of consciousness. Since consciousness exists as nothingness on the contrary to consciousness as duration, which refers to the immanence of the ego, it cannot utilize anything in being; its absolute existence is purified of any tendencies or motivations that are outside of itself. In this framework, Sartre’s stress on the pre-reflection proposes the connection between consciousness and the ego as different from Bergson’s formulation. To discern his reckoning with Bergson and the notion of transcendental ego, which allow him to endorse absolute freedom, his conception of the ego as a transcendent object plays a significant role.

### **4.3. The Ego and its Transcendence**

In his early work *Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre attempts to eliminate the notion of transcendental ego to stress his characterization of consciousness in terms of nothingness and spontaneity. In line with his articulation of intentionality, his fundamental thesis is that the ego is transcendent, it is external to consciousness. He basically asserts that in consciousness there is neither a unifying self nor an ego standing behind with an enduring identity; rather the ego is the product of consciousness for the synthetic totality of states and actions. That is to say, “the Ego is neither formally nor materially in consciousness: it is outside, in the world; it is a

being in the world, like the Ego of another” (Sartre, 2004, p.1). In this context, he declares that the ego is spontaneously constructed by impersonal consciousness as consciousness “determines itself to exist at every instant” (Sartre, 2004, p.27). Therefore, according to Sartre, self-determination occurs under consciousness’ unconditioned, autonomous, and continual activity of negation without engaging with a transcendental ego. In other words, if there is no transcendental ego that unifies the states of consciousness, then consciousness’ free activity is possible because there is no fixed point of reference inhabited in consciousness. To demonstrate this, in *Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre elaborates on how pre-reflective consciousness produces the ‘I’.

At the beginning of the book, by introducing the significant role of intentionality in his phenomenological approach, Sartre underlines the concrete life experience to indicate that the concept of transcendental ego is superfluous. In this respect, he claims that the concrete life experiences and their emergence as an awareness of consciousness can be depicted without appealing to any theory of subject or ego. In other words, for him, there is no need for a constitutive ego in the relationship established between consciousness and phenomena. Insofar as consciousness is nothing but pure intentionality, it is pointless to imagine a subject that is the agent of all this activity:

We can thus unhesitatingly reply: the phenomenological conception of consciousness renders the unifying and individualizing role of the I completely useless. It is, on the contrary, consciousness that renders the unity and personality of my I possible. The transcendental I thus has no *raison d’être*. (Sartre, 2004, p.4)

As stated above, Sartre brings pre-reflective consciousness to the fore to explicate the rule of consciousness’ existence: consciousness has a consciousness of itself as long as it is conscious of the transcendent object in the act of intention. As it follows from this, Sartre recognizes that there is no place for an ‘I’ in the pure existence of consciousness. To introduce the ‘I’ as an object or quality of consciousness at this stage means to blur consciousness, and therefore, transform concrete experience. In this way, with the individuality of ‘I’, pure consciousness loses its absolute character,

“so that it is no longer something spontaneous, but bears within itself the germ of opacity” (Sartre, 2004, p.5).

In the mode of pre-reflective or unreflective, consciousness does not establish itself as an object since it does not perform a positional orthetic action in order to reckon the existence of ‘I’. Hong suggests that, at this level, “consciousness does not constitute itself as a transcendent object; it is aware of itself in a relation of pure intimacy, so to speak” (Hong, 1991, p.47). That is, there is no ‘I’ which unifies intentional acts as standing behind the consciousness. To exemplify, when one drinks a coffee and smokes a cigarette, the objects that consciousness purely intends are the coffee, the cup, the cigarette, the ashes, etc. Here, the attention of consciousness is not on the ‘I’ and the ‘I’ does not function as a source of all these intentional objects. In this respect, Sartre argues that consciousness as an act of intention and the object that is intended are necessarily correlated with each other. What he means is that consciousness in the act of intending towards the objects is conscious of its being as a sheer inwardness. To clarify, Reisman suggests that “apprehension of oneself on this lowest level is the apprehension of oneself as an internal relation to an object of consciousness, the world (which itself admits of various levels of constitution)” (Reisman, 2007, p.26). That is to say, in Sartre’s idea of pre-reflective consciousness, we encounter a pure transparent consciousness “in which ‘to be’ and ‘to appear’ are one and the same” (Sartre, 2004, p.5). Before consciousness constitutes the ego as a totality of its states and actions, in the pre-reflection, it is aware of its being other than the object and appears to itself as a pure intentionality. Here, Breuer’s statement is illuminating: “it is present to itself as to an act that tears consciousness outside itself and throws it into the world” (Breuer, 2001, p.188). Thus, as Reisman agrees, with the emphasis on the pre-reflection, Sartre demonstrates us the two fundamental characteristics of consciousness:

Consciousness, on Sartre's view, is always aware of itself as not being its object. This presence to self is the basis of reflection. That consciousness is consciousness of something (intentionality) and aware of itself as such (translucency or pre-reflective presence to self) are two of its essential features. (Reisman, 2007, p.26)

In this light, by making a distinction between pre-reflective and reflective consciousness, Sartre proposes that the 'I' emerges in the reflective level. When the act of intention becomes an intentional object, one's attention switches to itself. In the same example, when consciousness focuses on the act of drinking coffee and smoking a cigarette, the 'I' appears in the scene. However, in this reflective mode, the 'I' cannot be grasped as a subject that is the agent of intentional acts. As a matter of fact, it does not stand for the condition of the reflective act of consciousness in the sense that it does not cause consciousness' change of direction from intended object to the act of intention. At this point, reflection arises from consciousness' shift of attention toward itself. In other words, according to Sartre, to say that I am drinking a coffee does not refer to the 'I' as a subject. On the contrary, the 'I' here is an object of reflecting consciousness:

Insofar as my reflecting consciousness is consciousness of itself, it is a non-positional consciousness. It becomes positional only if directed at the reflected consciousness which, in itself, was not a positional consciousness of itself before it was reflected. Thus the consciousness that says 'I think' is precisely not the consciousness that thinks. Or rather, it is not its own thought that it posits by thisthetic act. (Sartre, 2004, p.6)

To this extent, Sartre notices that what is primordial is pre-reflective consciousness insofar as, within the act of intention, pre-reflective consciousness does not require reflective consciousness to be consciousness of itself. On the ground of unreflective level of consciousness, reflective consciousness becomes possible. Since Sartre clarifies the function of consciousness as intentionality, these two levels of consciousness should not be understood as occurring in a sequence. He regards them as simultaneous moments of consciousness to emphasize that the appearance of 'I' in reflective consciousness is derived from pre-reflective consciousness. In this sense, the 'I' is not a subject that is explored at the reflective level; rather it is produced by consciousness' act of reflection:

This reflected consciousness becomes the object of the reflecting consciousness, without, however, ceasing to affirm its own object (a chair, a mathematical truth, etc). At the same time a new object appears which is the occasion for an affirmation of the reflective consciousness and is in consequence neither on the same level as unreflected consciousness (because

the latter is an absolute that has no need of reflective consciousness in order to exist), nor on the same level as the object of the unreflected consciousness (chair, etc.). This transcendent object of the reflective act is the I. (Sartre, 2004, p.9)

Furthermore, by explicating the constitution of the 'I' in the reflected consciousness, Sartre attempts to demonstrate the fallacy of philosophers who accept the 'I' as the root of their philosophy. According to him, the reason behind why they consider the 'I' as an origin, that is, a starting point is the presence of the 'I' in the acts of pre-reflective consciousness that are remembered or contemplated. In the act of thinking or remembering, the 'I' directly appears because "there is not a single one of my consciousness that I do not grasp as endowed with an I" (Sartre, 2004, p.6). However, Sartre insists that we can articulate the appearance of 'I' in the act of remembering or contemplating only in terms of synthesis of the pre-reflective and reflected consciousness. In Sartre's account, because reflected consciousness requires the pre-reflective consciousness to emerge and reflected consciousness becomes the object of reflecting consciousness as soon as it emerges, these two modes of consciousness cannot be formed in a unity. To underline this, Sartre puts forward the difference between non-positional and positional consciousness. When consciousness is aware of itself at pre-reflective level, it is non-positional consciousness. On the other hand, when the pre-reflective consciousness is awake to reflected consciousness, it turns into positional consciousness. He illustrates this with an example of reading. When I remember the contexts of my reading, I call to mind not only external particulars of my reading such as the characters in the book, the cover of the book, etc. but the pre-reflective consciousness since they maintain to be related to this consciousness. That is to say, when I remember my reading, I compose the contexts of my reading without losing contact with the non-positional consciousness of the act of reading:

I must maintain a sort of complicity with it, and draw up an inventory of its content in a non-positional way. The result is not in doubt: while I was reading, there was a consciousness of the book, of the heroes of the book, but the I did not inhabit this consciousness, it was merely consciousness of the object and non-positional consciousness of itself. (Sartre, 2004, p.7)

On this ground, by emphasizing the non-positional structure of consciousness, Sartre radically removes the 'I' from the pre-reflected existence of consciousness. When I remember my reading, consciousness' positional cognizance of the book comes along with its non-positional cognizance of itself. For him, this means that on the basis of the awareness of reflected consciousness, there is non-positional awareness of consciousness. Therefore, he leads to conclude that the 'I' does not dwell in the pre-reflective level of consciousness:

When I run after a tram, when I look at the time, when I become absorbed in the contemplation of a portrait, there is no I. There is a consciousness of the tram-needing-to-be-caught, etc., and a non-positional consciousness of consciousness. In fact, I am then plunged into the world of objects, it is they which constitute the unity of my consciousnesses, which present themselves with values, attractive and repulsive values, but as for me, I have disappeared, I have annihilated myself. There is no place for me at this level, and this is not the result of some chance, some momentary failure of attention: it stems from the very structure of consciousness. (Sartre, 2004, p.8)

In this respect, Sartre's emphasis on positional and non-positional consciousness points out consciousness' individualization itself through the world of objects and its reflective act. The world of phenomena forms consciousness and the unity of consciousness is established on the condition of consciousness' being conscious of the object and itself. In another words, within its absolute character, consciousness individualizes itself through the intended objects and acts of reflection. In the intentional act of consciousness, the objects in the world are regarded as useful, lovely, harmful, etc. The self, in the reflective consciousness, gives meaning to these qualities. Thus, it is "on this level that egotistic life is placed and on the unreflected level that is placed impersonal life" (Sartre, 2004, p.11). As it follows from this, Sartre wants to demonstrate that absolute consciousness constitutes the ego in the world and grasps it as a transcendent object through its process of individualization. Admittedly, at this point, the fundamental tenet of Sartre's existentialism discloses itself. That is, the absolute and autonomous consciousness gives rise to the appearance of the 'I' and the world as correlative to each other in the experience. Thus, as Hong affirms, "with this characterization, there is no need of a unifying I. Consciousness is primordial" (Hong, 1991, p.47).

Accordingly, in the second part of *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre argues that the Ego is born out of consciousness' immanent dynamism in which it effectuates itself as the unity of itself. In this sense, he claims that the ego is the unity of qualities, states, and actions. In order to demonstrate the constitution of the ego through reflection, he pays attention to the role of reflective consciousness. For him, "the *state* appears to reflective consciousness" (Sartre, 2004, p.12). To exemplify, if I love Peter, my loving of Peter is different from the act of loving Peter in the sense that I intend to my loving rather than the act of loving. For Sartre, these two intentions are not the same. Thus, in the second-order intention, my loving of Peter becomes the object of consciousness as well as it is a state that can be intuited by reflective consciousness. Like the objects in the world, state is transcendent. Since it exists to reflective consciousness, "it extends beyond the instantaneous moment of consciousness and it is not subject to the absolute law of consciousness for which there is no distinction possible between appearance and being" (Sartre, 2004, p.13). In that respect, Sartre emphasizes that my loving of Peter is not immanent to consciousness; it stands for a genuine object which I grasp through the experience. With this claim, apart from the dynamic structure of absolute consciousness, he characterizes a state as inert and passive. He explains this with the following words:

The passivity of a spatio-temporal thing is constituted on the basis of its existential relativity. A relative existence can only be passive, since the least activity would free it from its relative status and would constitute it as absolute. Likewise hatred, as an existence relative to the reflective consciousness, is inert. And, of course, in talking of the inertia of hatred, we do not mean anything other than that it appears that way to consciousness. (Sartre, 2004, p.14)

Hence, according to Sartre, psychological states are inert and passive. However, at the same time, reflective consciousness is certain of the spontaneity of reflected consciousness. To eliminate the contradiction between the terms passivity and spontaneity in the constitution of the ego, Sartre uses the word 'emanation' to demonstrate the connection between psychological states and instantaneities (spontaneities) of consciousness. In this sense, he remarks that "repulsion appears, as it were, to produce itself at the prompting of hatred and at the expense of hatred.

Hatred appears through it as that from which it emanates” (Sartre, 2004, p.15). As a result, Sartre’s theory of the ego as the constitution of absolute consciousness is rooted in the distinction he establishes between consciousness and psychical. What is primordial is consciousness and the psychical is not a mode of consciousness. It is “the transcendent object of the reflective consciousness” (Sartre, 2004, p.16). In reflection, the ego comes to the scene as the concrete integrity of the psychical. In other words, the ego consistently notices the synthesis of states and actions. As being a concrete wholeness of them, the ego is transcendent to this synthesis; thus, it cannot be reduced to one particular state or action. It is not the condition of consciousness’ activity but it is constituted through consciousness’ individualization:

If one were looking for an analogy for the unreflected consciousness of what the Ego is for second-order consciousness, in my view we should think rather of the World, conceived as the infinite synthetic totality of all things. It also happens, indeed, that we grasp the World beyond our immediate surroundings as a vast concrete existence. In this case, the things surrounding us appear merely as the extreme point of that world which surpasses them and envelops them. The Ego is to psychical objects what the World is to things. (Sartre, 2004, p.18)

In this context, by focusing on the issue of concreteness, Sartre explicates the relationship between consciousness and the ego in terms of spontaneity. According to him, since the ego is the concrete totality of the objects of reflective consciousness, absolute consciousness projects its spontaneity into the ego while constituting it. Put it differently, when consciousness objectifies itself by reflecting on itself as being consciousness of something, it posits itself as spontaneous, that is, as a root of its states and actions. Therefore, “the unifying act of reflection links each new state in a very special way to the concrete totality me” (Sartre, 2004, p.19). Hence, two kinds of spontaneity appear: that of consciousness and that of ego. Yet, Sartre notes that the latter should not be confused with the first one because what is original is the spontaneity of consciousness. Since the ego is passive as being a transcendent object of consciousness, the spontaneity of the ego is a transformed spontaneity of consciousness. Here, Sartre affirms that the original spontaneity is

lucid in the sense that it cannot be otherwise what it generates. However, when this perfect spontaneity is linked with the ego, it encloses passivity and opacity:

We would be forced, in fact, to admit that it is turning from itself into something else, which would in turn presuppose that spontaneity exceeds itself. The spontaneity of the Ego exceeds itself because the Ego's hatred, although unable to exist by itself alone, possesses in spite of everything a certain independence vis-à-vis the Ego. As a result, the Ego is always surpassed by what it produces, even though, from another point of view, it is what it produces. (Sartre, 2004, pp.19-20)

To this extent, in Sartre's account, although the spontaneity of ego is superior, the spontaneity of consciousness is original. The determinations in me and my world are derived from the pure act of consciousness, that is, intentionality. This signifies that the existentialist structures of being in the world originate from the spontaneity of consciousness. Accordingly, he remarks that "the link between the Ego and its states thus remains an unintelligible spontaneity" (Sartre, 2004, p.20). Concerning this, he criticizes Bergson by defining Bergson's notion of duration and its linkage to freedom as a degenerate spontaneity in which "the producer is passive vis-à-vis the thing created" (Sartre, 2004, p.20). Because the ego is immanent to consciousness in duration, Bergson "is describing an object and not a consciousness" (Sartre, 2004, p.20). In this context, for Sartre, Bergson constructs freedom over the reflected consciousness by ignoring pre-reflective existence of consciousness. That is to say, Bergson's theory of freedom refers to derivative spontaneity. In his characterization of duration in terms of interpenetrative multiplicity, Bergson considers the ego as a part of consciousness. For this reason, Sartre affirms that Bergson misunderstands the inwardness of consciousness, therefore, neglects that it is a pre-condition.

In relation to consciousness, the Ego is given as intimate. It is just as if the Ego were part of consciousness, with the sole and essential difference that it is opaque to consciousness. And this opacity is grasped as lack of distinctness. Lack of distinctness, a notion frequently used in philosophy, in various forms, is inwardness seen from outside, or, if you prefer, the degraded projection of inwardness. It is this lack of distinctness that can be found for example in the well-known 'interpenetrative multiplicity' of Bergson. (Sartre, 2004, p.21)

Nevertheless, what is genuinely primary is the pre-reflective consciousness in which “the absolute inwardness never has any outside” (Sartre, 2004, p.21). The states and the ego are created through this absolute consciousness. In this creation, consciousness mirrors its spontaneity to the ego. However, unlike the absolute structure of consciousness that comes from its impersonality, the ego is personal and it is influenced by the effects of what it produces:

By virtue of this passivity, the Ego is capable of being affected. Nothing can act on consciousness, since it is the cause of itself. But, on the contrary, the Ego that produces is affected by the repercussions from what it produces. It is ‘compromised’ by what it produces. The relations are here inverted: the action or the state turns back on to the Ego in order to qualify it. This brings us back again to the relationship of participation. Every new state produced by the Ego colours and nuances the Ego in the moment the Ego produces it. (Sartre, 2004, p.20)

In brief, Sartre’s phenomenology indicates that the ego is not the possessor of consciousness; it is the transcendent object of instantaneous consciousness. In every act of consciousness, there occurs a new existence in which the states, actions, and the ego are constituted. Thus, according to Sartre, consciousness is a founding activity that reveals ‘me’ and my world in experience. It is an absolute activity in the sense that it does not transform into what it produces. That is, “this absolute consciousness, when it is purified of the I, is no longer in any way a subject, nor is it a collection of representations; it is quite simply a precondition and an absolute source of existence” (Sartre, 2004, pp.29-30).

#### **4.4. Being-for-Others**

Up to this section, I elaborated on Sartre’s notion of consciousness under the ontological structure of being-for-itself to elucidate his phenomenological ontology. My emphasis on the pre-reflective awareness of consciousness and the appearance of the ‘I’ in reflection allow us to formulate Sartre’s central idea of intentionality that endorses consciousness’ existence in its relation to the world of objects and the ego. Along with this, Sartre’s description of being-for-Others as a dimension of being-for-

itself, that is, an immediate structure of the for-itself discloses consciousness' apprehension of itself in the midst of the world by encountering the Other since "there is in everyday reality an original relation to the Other which can be constantly pointed to" (Sartre, 1978, p.253). In this sense, it can be articulated that being-for-Others indicates the portrait of Sartre's existentialism as it manifests individual lived experiences in terms of an ontological peculiarity of the for-itself. In order to emphasize this, Reisman affirms that being-for-Others signifies Sartre's conception of the individual:

The two modes of being Sartre discusses before being-for-others (being-in-itself and being-for-itself) allow consciousness to apprehend itself as a relation to an object, which is in turn apprehended as independent, as overflowing the act of consciousness. Thus far there is nothing that consciousness can do to apprehend itself as independent of its self-apprehension: failing to bring any new mode of being to the consciousness reflected-on, the reflecting consciousness cannot distinguish itself from it... A further reflective act directed at the looked-at allows consciousness to apprehend itself as having an unknown dimension, as having aspects that are forever out of its reflective reach. (Reisman, 2007, p.75)

To explain the meaning of being-for-Others, in the third part of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre offers the experiences of the look and shame in which the for-itself's relation with the Other is disclosed through being looked at by the Other. As he argues, "this relation, in which the Other must be given to me directly as a subject although in connection with me, is the fundamental relation, the very type of my being-for-others" (Sartre, 1978, p.253). In this respect, to explicate consciousness' aspect of being-for-Others, firstly, he examines its confrontation with the Other as an object by introducing the example of one's walking in the park. When I am in the park, with its all elements, the park is constituted through my consciousness' act of intention. For instance, the bench near the flowers seems more relaxing to me to rest or the tree I am focusing on casts a bigger shadow than the others. In this intentional activity, I pre-reflectively experience the park and my consciousness is conscious of the objects in the park. Nevertheless, when I see someone in the park, she or he becomes both an object and a subject for my consciousness in the sense that I know this person is different from the objects in the park. That is to say, "I see this man; I

apprehend him as an object and at the same time as a man” (Sartre, 1978, p.254). This special object, the Other, is a subject who arranges the objects in the park depending in her attention. Thus, with the presence of the Other, I realize the fact that someone other than me who is consciousness can also compose the park for herself with her consciousness’ intentional acts:

The grass is something qualified; it is this green grass which exists for the Other; in this sense the very quality of the object, its deep, raw green is in direct relation to this man. This green turns toward the Other a face which escapes me. I apprehend the relation of the green to the Other as an objective relation, but I cannot apprehend the green as it appears to the Other. Thus suddenly an object has appeared which has stolen the world from me. Everything is in place; everything still exists for me; but everything is traversed by an invisible flight and fixed in the direction of a new object. The appearance of the Other in the world corresponds therefore to a fixed sliding of the whole universe, to a decentralization of the world which undermines the centralization which I am simultaneously effecting. (Sartre, 1978, p.255)

Moreover and significantly, since the Other is consciousness, she can establish me as an object in turn. Put it differently, my seeing of her signifies that she can position me as an object like I have already positioned her. With the following words, Sartre expresses this:

In a word, my apprehension of the Other in the world as probably being a man refers to my permanent possibility of being-seen-by-him; that is, to the permanent possibility that a subject who sees me may be substituted for the object seen by me. "Being-seen-by-the-Other" is the truth of "seeing-the-Other." (Sartre, 1978, p.257)

In this context, Sartre asserts that the crucial point here, that is, being looked at by the Other should be explained to clarify the meaning of being-for-Others. Accordingly, he introduces his well-known illustration of the shame by suggesting us to suppose that there is a jealous person who is peeping through the keyhole. In this activity, as Sartre affirms, consciousness exists in the pre-reflective level and it is a non-thetic consciousness. That is to say, at this moment, there is no self that dwells in consciousness to characterize the acts of the voyeur. He is his deeds therefore “they carry in themselves their whole justification” (Sartre, 1978, p.259). His world consists of himself and what he sees through the keyhole. Daigle clarifies this point

by stating that “the whole situation relates to him, and he is the sole provider of meaning in this situation” (Daigle, 2010, p.74). Yet, when he suddenly hears footsteps behind him, within the possibility of the presence of the Other, his pre-reflective consciousness turns out to be a reflective consciousness of the feeling of shame. Sartre announces that it is the shame of the self; “it is the recognition of the fact that I am indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging” (Sartre, 1978, p.271). The voyeur now becomes the object in the Other’s world and the look of the Other defines him as a spy in the sense that the look grants him a fixed ego.

What is at issue here in Sartre’s emphasis is that the Other freely gives any value or meaning to my acts whatever she likes since she is a for-itself. By being absolutely free, the Other interprets the things in the world in terms of her fundamental project. As Daigle illuminates:

The look of the Other unto me informs me that I have no control over a part of myself: my being-for-others is strictly determined by others. I am an object among others and have a certain meaning in the Other’s world, according to the Other’s own project, and there is nothing I can do about it. (Daigle, 2010, p.75)

In this context, the look of the Other becomes a danger to my freedom, and this is the way in which my being-for-Others is revealed. Before the look, that is, when I am alone, I am not someone; rather I am separated from myself by nothingness. However, when I am looked at, I obtain a being which is not depended on my own determination. For Sartre, this means that I am someone “as it is written in and by the Other’s freedom” (Sartre, 1978, p.262). More precisely, with her absolute freedom, the Other has to determine my being-for-her inasmuch as she has to make her being. Hence, “each of my free conducts engages me in a new environment where the very stuff of my being is the unpredictable freedom of another” (Sartre, 1978, p.262). In that regard, when I am ashamed, my being is revealed to me in the fashion of the in-itself. Accordingly, to clarify my being-for-Others, Sartre contrasts it with the feeling of anguish which I will point out in the next chapter to signify the existential sense of absolute freedom. He mainly states that in anguish I grasp my own possibilities in the sense that I perceive my own nothingness which is “the condition of my

transcendence” (Sartre, 1978, p.263). But, by transcending my transcendence, the Other’s look alienates my possibilities from me, and this refers to the “alienation of the world which I organize” (Sartre, 1978, p.263). Therefore, when I am nothing but my possibles, “I am what I am not and am not what I am - behold now I am somebody! And the one who I am - and who on principle escapes me - I am he *in the midst of the world* in so far as he escapes me” (Sartre, 1978, p.263).

In this sense, Sartre announces that my being-for-Others is not my constitution; nevertheless, I need to accept responsibility for this constitution as it evidently implies a component of my being:

When the Other describes my character, I do not "recognize" myself and yet I know that "it is me." I accept the responsibility for this stranger who is presented to me, but he does not cease to be a stranger. This is because he is neither a simple unification of my subjective representations, not a "Me" which I am in the sense of the *Ich bin Ich*, nor an empty image which the Other makes of me for himself and for which he alone bears the responsibility. This Me, which is not to be compared to the Me which I have to be, is still Me but metamorphosed by a new setting and adapted to that setting; it is a being, my being but with entirely new dimensions of being and new modalities. (Sartre, 1978, p.274)

Thus, the appearance of the Other makes me responsible in the sense that I comprehend my facticity in terms of a fly toward being-in-the-world. That is to say, “in particular, I feel myself touched by the Other in my factual existence; it is my being-there-for others for which I am responsible” (Sartre, 1978, p.351).

All in all, at the heart of the ontological structure of being-for-itself, Sartre offers us his account of consciousness as intentionality and nothingness. By directing toward the world, as being deprived of the contents and the ego, pure consciousness always finds itself in the mode of determining itself. This is the key issue of Sartre’s philosophy because it makes sense the way in which Sartre defends his central idea of absolute freedom in relation to temporality. The essence of consciousness is its freedom to always surpass itself by virtue of nihilating power. In this context, it can be articulated that the important aspects of Sartre’s phenomenology, that is, nihilation, transcendence, the constitution of the ego, and pure spontaneity, on the

one hand, lays the foundation to figure out freedom in its absolute sense integrated with the primordial time, on the other hand, reflect Sartre's comment on the notion of duration which will be pointed out in the next chapter. Furthermore, as an ontological aspect of being-for-itself, Sartre's idea of being-for-Others allows us to figure out how he conceptualizes being-in-the-world within the themes of responsibility and freedom arising from his phenomenological method. These key notions, which will be addressed in the discussion of Sartre's theory of freedom, mark the existentialist points of his philosophy that diverge from Bergson's philosophy of life.

## CHAPTER 5

### TIME AND FREEDOM IN SARTRE: A COMPARATIVE READING WITH BERGSON

Within the scope of his existential ontology, Sartre presents his conception of time as opposed to traditional understanding. After announcing his fundamental thesis, which affirms that consciousness exists as nothingness, in the first part of *Being and Nothingness*, he discusses temporality within the structure of being-for-itself in order to posit his phenomenology of time as distinguished from ordinary conceptualization in which irreversible sequences of 'now' conceived homogeneously. In this context, Sartre emphasizes that temporality occurs in the fundamental attempt of being-for-itself which refers to its rejection of being identical with itself. According to him, this nihilating act of the for-itself, that is, the primordial activity of consciousness, provides a qualitative relationship between the past, the present, and the future while holding them in unity as a whole. In this light, he characterizes his existential theory of freedom in relation to his understanding of original temporality which assumes a heterogeneous synthesis. As it seems from the core of his phenomenological ontology, being-for-itself's central role in temporalizing itself establishes a link between absolute freedom and original temporality. In this regard, the portrait of freedom in terms of qualitative time allows Sartre to avoid the traditional debate between free will and determinism in which freedom is questioned under a homogeneous conception of time. To this extent, to explicate how Sartre constructs the existential sense of freedom, this chapter is mainly divided into three parts. In the first part, I will concentrate on Sartre's formulation of the past, present, and future to shed light on the structure of original temporality. Moreover, I will dwell on Sartre's distinction between pure reflection and impure reflection to demonstrate the relationship between temporality and reflection and its function in his criticism of Bergson. Accordingly, in the second part, along with the discussion of free will and

determinism, I will bring absolute freedom to the fore by focusing on the key connections, namely, nothingness, freedom, and anguish to qualify freedom in terms of self-determination. Finally, in the last part, to assess the complete picture of Sartre's existential freedom, I will compare Bergson's philosophy of life with Sartre's phenomenology through the difference between duration and temporality. In doing so, I will emphasize the self-world correlation proposed by Sartre to figure out in what respect Sartre engages in Bergson's philosophy and criticizes his conception of freedom.

### **5.1. Primordial Time: Temporality**

Sartre's theory of temporality affirms the formation of three elements of time as a totality or synthesis that is grounded in the nihilating act of for-itself which refers to the ontological structure of human reality. As understood in this way, he mainly argues that under the temporal ecstases in which the for-itself individually temporalizes, the three dimensions of time are heterogeneously linked to each other through an internal bond that does not constitute "an infinite series of 'nows' in which some are not yet and others no longer" (Sartre, 1978, p.107). However, this intrinsic connection is heterogeneous in the sense that it allows the elements of time to be the "structured moments of an original synthesis" (Sartre, 1978, p.107). In this context, by characterizing temporality as an original synthesis, Sartre opposes the theories that deny the existence of the past and accept the future as a representation. For him, the fallacy of these theories comes from prioritizing the objective time in which the past, the present, and the future are separated from each other. Yet, in Sartre's account, as Manser emphasizes, "consciousness is temporal, without prior knowledge of the time of the world. Indeed, only if there were a prior temporalisation would it be possible to establish a public time" (Manser, 1989, p.27). In this respect, he notes that three dimensions of time get their meaning in relation to the being which itself is individually temporalizing out of the foundation of its nothingness, that is, its refusal to be. Thus, Catalano suggests that, in Sartre's

understanding, time “comes to being only through a reality that is temporal in its own reality” (Catalano, 1985, p.111). The internal bond that connects the past, the present, and the future is negative in its very nature because consciousness escapes being and loses its identity in its every directedness towards the world. To organize its being-in-the-world, it brings totality and temporality into being. If the for-itself is not identical with itself in being present to the world, it is outside of itself. In order to clarify this account of temporality, Bouton pays attention to the relationship between consciousness’ power of nihilation and its pre-reflective existence:

Consciousness is non-thetic consciousness of self and relates only to itself in a pre-reflective mode, which implies a distance from itself, a non-coincidence with self which stems from its nihilating power. So the For-itself needs the present to be itself, but the presence to itself of the For-itself is a presence fractured by its own negativity, which defines the temporality of its presence. (Bouton, 2014, p.217)

Concerning this, Sartre inclines to say that this being outside of itself forms the heterogeneity between the past, the present, and the future and reveals the unity or totality of temporality. To remark this unity, he formulates the issue in terms of before and behind:

As For-itself it has its being outside of it, before and behind. Behind, it was its past; and before, it will be its future. It is a flight outside of co-present being and from the being which it was toward the being which it will be. At present, it is not what it is (past) and it is what it is not (future). (Sartre, 1978, p.123)

In this context, to achieve the intuition of the dynamic being of time as a totality and therefore temporality as a whole in its heterogeneity, which is based on the structure of for-itself, Sartre notably describes each dimension of time by considering the qualitative relation of each to the others.

### **5.1.1. The Meaning of the Past, the Present, and the Future**

To indicate his characterization of the past, at the beginning of his analysis, Sartre presents his criticism of two groups of theories that deal with the problem of memory

and temporality. He notices that these theories do not endorse the unity of time because they break up the link between the past and the present. “Whether the past is, as Bergson and Husserl claim, or is not any more as Descartes claims, is hardly of any importance if we are to begin by cutting down all bridges between it and our present” (Sartre, 1978, pp.109-110). Herein, he disapproves of Bergson’s philosophy in which the past is regarded as “simply being retired, losing its efficiency without losing its being” (Sartre, 1978, p.109). In this regard, he admits that even if we consider duration as the continual participation of the past into the present, we cannot offer a justification for how the past is reborn into the future since we accept this intertwining as unconscious and ignore the ontological relation of the past to the present. Accordingly, for Sartre, because these theories both consider consciousness as being-in-itself and isolate it in the instantaneity of the present, they lose out to recognize the original relationship between consciousness and its past that stems from the ontological structure of being-for-itself:

Whatever may be their concept of consciousness, they have conferred on it the existence of the in-itself; they have considered it as being what it is. There is no reason to wonder afterwards that they fail to reconnect the past to the present, for the present thus conceived will reject the past with all its strength. If they had considered the temporal phenomenon in its totality, they would have seen that "my" past is first of all mine; that is, that it exists as the function of a certain being which I am. The past is not nothing; neither is it the present; but at its very source, it is bound to a certain present and to a certain future, to both of which it belongs. (Sartre, 1978, p.110)

In this sense, Sartre claims that the past is synthetically connected to the present in the notion of ‘myness’ as it is my past and I am my past. The reconnection between the past and the present can be achieved if the existence of the past is regarded “as a transcendence behind my present of today” (Sartre, 1978, p.111). In opposition to the external relationship between these two elements of time, which is expressed by ‘having a past’ to signify possession, the internal relation of the past to the present is provided by being its own past. As a result, the past arrives into the world by me. At this point, Sartre states that Bergson’s understanding of interpenetration portrays the relationship between the past and the present externally because the past cannot be the present even though it participates in the present. When we conceive the present

in terms of the past, we eliminate the immanent relationship between them; therefore, externalize their connection to each other. Hence, for there to be internal relation, only the present can be its past:

External relations would hide an impassable abyss between a past and a present which would then be two factual givens without real communication. Even the absolute interpenetration of the present by the past, as Bergson conceives it, does not resolve the difficulty because this interpenetration, which is the organization of the past with the present, comes ultimately from the past itself and is only a relation of habitation. (Sartre, 1978, p.113)

Given this, Sartre effectively describes the ontology of the past, which originally consists of the intrinsic relationship between a human being and her particular past, under the emphasis on the term 'was'. To show this internal connection, he remarks that the qualitative relation of the past to present is indicated by the term 'was' as it manifests the ontological upsurge from the present into the past and "represents original synthesis of these two temporal modes" (Sartre, 1978, p.114). The past becomes identified with itself since it is fixed but it relates to the for-itself as it is my past, that is, my facticity. Because of the fact that I cannot live it and I cannot add anything to it, my past designates the impassable totality of the in-itself "which I have to be without any possibility of not being it" (Sartre, 1978, p.118). The very crucial point of this characterization that endorses the existential approach is that Sartre does not consider the relation of the past to the present within a homogenous medium; rather there is an absolute heterogeneity in which the meaning of being someone's past manifests itself from the standpoint of the present. According to him, to think otherwise is to remove the dynamic relation of the past to the present and thus represent the past as a passive being that cannot be discoverable in the present:

I am the one by whom my past arrives in this world. But it must be understood that I do not give being to it. In other words, it does not exist as "my" representation. It is not because I "represent" my past that it exists. But it is because I am my past that it enters into the world, and it is in terms of its being-in-the-world that I can by applying a particular psychological process represent it to myself. (Sartre, 1978, pp.115-116)

Like in the case of the past, the present is introduced into the world through the for-itself. Nevertheless, as they are not homogeneously linked to each other within the

course of time, the past and the present stand for the different ontological facets of human reality. Although my past refers to the totality of in-itself which I was, the present is the existence of the for-itself. In this context, according to Sartre, the fundamental meaning of the present undergoes in being present to the world by continually negating the background, that is, the in-itself. Thus, in Sartre's account, the present reveals the structure of intentionality that suggests the ontological characteristics of the for-itself. Since the intentionality is based on the negation, "the For-itself's Presence to being implies that the For-itself is a witness of itself in the presence of being as not being that being" (Sartre, 1978, p.122). To be here means to be a presence to a being by an internal bond in order to bring determination into being. Therefore, for Sartre, the present cannot be defined as momentary 'now' so that time cannot be regarded as a static, that is, non-temporal composition in which the moments of the past have disappeared, and the moments of the future have not yet arrived. By stating that the present denotes the very nature of being-for-itself, Sartre expresses that time in its essence is temporality. Bouton clarifies Sartre's approach by declaring that the present in the fashion of *presence* "is the presence of the For-itself to the world and to itself, and it is not, for it is the perpetual flight of the For-itself in the face of being" (Bouton, 2014, p.220).

Accordingly, the future, which its being refers to the mode of possibility in its full actuality, is heterogeneously connected to the present as it reveals what the present is. Since it is separated from itself in its every intentional act, the for-itself fails to be a self in the present, therefore, it is presented to itself without identifying with itself. At this point, in the sense of ekstastic temporality, Sartre again describes the future through the for-itself's ontological quality. He commits that by virtue of the for-itself's being at a distance from itself in the present, the future is opened up with infinite possibilities as long as "only a being which has to be its being instead of simply being it can have a future" (Sartre, 1978, p.124). In this sense, the future reveals the for-itself's incapability of being because it has to be beyond being. The for-itself with a future transcends its facticity and becomes a possibility of being. Here, Sartre emphasizes that insofar as the future enables for-itself to realize its lack

in the achievement of the present through the apprehension of its nothingness, the for-itself makes itself as a project to itself towards what it is not yet. To explain this in terms of freedom, he states the difference of the future from the past:

The Past is, to be sure, the being which I am outside of myself, but it is the being which I am without the possibility of not being it. This is what we have defined as being its past behind itself. The being of the Future which I have to be, on the contrary, is such that I can only be it; for my freedom gnaws at its being from below. This means that the Future constitutes the meaning of my present For-itself, as the project of its possibility, but that it in no way predetermines my For-itself which is to-come, since the For-itself is always abandoned to the nihilating obligation of being the foundation of its nothingness. (Sartre, 1978, p.128)

Here, the meaning of the future significantly discloses itself. As Sartre regards the future as an aspect of being-for-itself in which its possibility of being revealed, the for-itself unlimitedly gains its free choice, that is, its freedom. In other words, freedom signifies the meaning of the for-itself only because the future is what the for-itself can have to be in “the continual possibilization of possibles” (Sartre, 1978, p.129). On this account, Sartre refrains from considering the future as the moments to come that are arranged in chronological order. By objecting to homogeneity, he foregrounds original temporality which primordially includes a hierarchy of my possibles that cannot be subject to the universal temporality. There is no homogeneously ordered relationship between past, present, and future; rather these three dimensions are heterogeneously linked to each other in Sartre’s understanding. The for-itself is its past and it carries its past into the world which is disclosed by the for-itself’s intentional acts in the present. Its present is revealed by its future in which it goes beyond its past and establishes its self-projection on the horizon of infinite possibilities. In fact, to demonstrate the derivative character of the homogenous conception of time, Sartre emphasizes the gaps that occur in the series of these infinite possibilities. Without any space, the system of knowledge assumes the completion of the gaps through the formation of homogeneous time; “in the order of action they will be filled by the will- that is, by rational thematizing choice in terms of my possibles, and of possibilities which are not and will never be my possibilities” (Sartre, 1978, p.129).

### **5.1.2. Reflection and Temporality: The Critique of Bergson**

Sartre's phenomenology of time echoes Bergson's philosophy in terms of isolating original temporality from its homogeneous specification to achieve a pure duration that is substantially connected to the very nature of human reality. Similar to Bergson's radical attempt, in which freedom is inquired within the horizon of time, Sartre's analysis of temporality leads to a notion of freedom that reveals its meaning within the scope of existential ontology. However, on the way to freedom, there are crucial points that distinguish Sartre's philosophy from Bergson's. This subtle distinction, which leads to an interpretation of the notion of freedom in terms of existentialism, arises out of Sartre's criticism of Bergson's duration and his understanding of the self that is directly linked to the issue of temporality.

In the third section of the chapter 'Temporality', Sartre deals with the distinction between original temporality and psychic temporality to underline the relation of the pre-reflective consciousness to temporality. The reason behind this focus is Sartre's discovery of the appearance of the ego in reflection. In this sense, to pay attention to the original temporality, he speaks of two kinds of reflection. On the one hand, there is pure reflection in which the self non-thetically reflects to itself by being immediately aware of its temporality. On the other hand, there is impure reflection in which the self positionally reflects to itself in a more intelligible way that constitutes the ego along with psychic temporality. From this perspective, Sartre criticizes Bergson through the difference between the original temporality and psychic temporality which corresponds to the distinction between pure reflection and impure reflection in a manner of temporalizing. By emphasizing the original temporality as a whole in terms of historicity, he affirms that Bergson's theory of consciousness, that is, the multiplicity of interpenetration, refers to the psychological duration "which we know and which we daily make use of as successions of organized temporal forms" (Sartre, 1978, p.158). That is why duration corresponds to "the concrete fabric of the psychic unities of the flow" (Sartre, 1978, p.158). At the heart of this critique lies Sartre's

rejection of consciousness as a psychic state. For him, Bergson's account of consciousness cannot give the meaning of interpenetration because his analysis cannot justify how the penetrating parts flow into each other. For this reason, Bergson's founding of interpenetration in terms of intuition, which is characterized by Sartre as a property of psychic, does not serve as an ontological explanation as "it is by itself incapable of determining itself in existence" (Sartre, 1978, p.166). Therefore, it becomes irrelevant to the structure of the for-itself because "its character as something inert, as a passive datum is accentuated by the fact that it exists without being for a consciousness, either thetic or non-thetic" (Sartre, 1978, p.166). That is to say, since this inactive inert multitude is not established on the nihilating act of the for-itself and concerned as existing "without being for a consciousness", a man naturally "fails to recognize it and has to have recourse to intuition in order to apprehend it" (Sartre, 1978, p.166). In the light of the insufficiency of intuition, Sartre associates Bergson's duration with the psychic temporality which consists of the already organized successive 'nows' rather than the unification of elements that is constructed by ekstastic relations. Psychic temporality inherits passive intimate cohesion that is not capable of forming the ekstastic unity of the for-itself. In this context, Sartre defines psychic temporality as a product of impure reflection to stress the linkage between temporality and the phenomenon of reflection. He suggests that in impure reflection we engage with the successions of the past, the present, and the future which "all exist in the mode of having-been" (Sartre, 1978, p.168). According to him, under the notion of penetration, Bergson's duration manifests this mode. It is removed from the ontological foundation so that there is no room for a being which has to be its future and its past in duration. Hence, reflection in duration can only be impure as it can only reveal the groundless intuition of the for-itself within the scope of the in-itself. In this respect, Sartre identifies impure reflection in its relation to the in-itself. He regards Bergson as a psychologist and he claims that psychologists deal with the in-itself as an object of psychic when they effort to explain temporality:

But due to the fact that the psychic object is in-itself, its present cannot be flight, nor can its future be pure possibility. In these forms of flow, there is an

essential priority of the Past, which is what the For-itself was and which already presupposes the transformation of the For-itself into In-itself.” (Sartre, 1978, p.165)

The three dimensions of time lose their ontological character in psychologists’ attempts since they define temporality regardless of the fundamental structure of the for-itself, that is, its upsurge from the in-itself. In this apprehension, the psychic form stands for the cohesion of isolated ‘nows’ but not for a synthesis. Hence, “the psychic form is not to-be; it is already made; it is already complete, past, present, future, in the mode has been” (Sartre, 1978, p.165). For Sartre, this crucial point constitutes the fundamental difference of the original temporality from psychic temporality. The original temporality temporalizes itself while the psychic time in the empty form of before and after “orders the relations between objects equally past” (Sartre, 1978, p.170).

By addressing Bergson’s duration in impure reflection, Sartre aims to clarify pure reflection with its necessary relation to his concept of absolute freedom. The existential outlines of his ontology are highlighted by purified reflection which refers to the original and ideal form of reflection by being the product of the original temporality. In pure reflection, by becoming present to all its ecstases, the self recognizes itself as a project which is never complete. In this recognition of projection, the past and the present of the reflected-on “are not only held in the unity of a for-itself which exhausts their being in having to be it but also for a for-itself which is separated from them by a nothingness” (Sartre, 1978, p.158). In contrast to psychic temporality, in which the psychic is treated as an object, the self realizes its foundation for its own nothingness in pure reflection. Thus, contrary to the self’s realization itself as an object in impure reflection, the self instead figures itself out without reducing its subjectivity into objectivity. In this framework, the Sartrean notion of freedom apparently reveals its meaning. With its preserved subjectivity, the self is brought back to the original temporality by recognizing its historicity through the condition of possibility:

Pure reflection still discovers temporality only in its own original non-substantiality, in its refusal to be in-itself. It discovers possibles qua

possibles, lightened by the freedom of the for-itself. It reveals the present as transcendent; and if the past appears to it as in-itself, still the past is on the foundation of presence. (Sartre, 1978, p.158)

In the mode of pure reflection, the for-itself discovers its unique individuality in its unachieved totality. This recognition of the for-itself is called by Sartre historicity which implies the apprehension of temporality in the fashion of being always “at a distance from itself, in the future, in the past, in the world” (Sartre, 1978, p.158). In this sense, the historicity means original temporality as it is differentiated from psychic temporality in terms of including not successive regulated temporal forms that occur in daily existence, but rather heterogeneity in which “the flow reaches toward being as an “outside” outlined in immanence” (Sartre, 1978, p.158) through pure reflection. Accordingly, Sartre signifies that pure reflection is a kind of reflection in which the self explores its possibilities by realizing the groundlessness of its choices and its created ego originated from these unjustifiable choices. In this regard, in the original temporality, the self discovers its created ego in terms of its absolute freedom that makes temporality possible as “for-itself derives its meaning from its possibilities and from its future” (Sartre, 1978, p.157). By virtue of this recognition, the for-itself becomes presented to all ekstastic dimensions and its temporalizing itself comes through its freedom in the sense of refusing to be in instantaneity:

As the for-itself temporalizes itself, there are these results: (1) Reflection, as the mode of being of the for-itself, must be as temporalization, and it is itself its past and its future (2) By nature reflection extends its laws and its certitude to the possibilities which I am and to the past which I was. (Sartre, 1978, p.157)

## **5.2. Existential Sense of Absolute Freedom**

In the beginning of this chapter, it is articulated that the existential sense of freedom can be grasped within the scope of Sartre’s phenomenology of time that assumes ontological investigation of the being-for-itself. In this framework, the rest of this chapter will seek to draw the portrait of Sartrean freedom in connection to his

understanding of human existence in its power of temporalizing. I argue that his notion of original temporality strongly projects the meaning of absolute freedom which is grounded in his phenomenological ontology. In this respect, by establishing the link between ontology and existentialism, temporality in Sartre moves freedom beyond the discussions of free will and determinism. Along with for-itself's temporalization, that is, its refusal to be in instantaneity, freedom in Sartre expresses the human being's revelation of its essence by transcending the world toward its own possibilities. To be absolutely free means to be condemned to create one's own self. On this ground, Sartre rejects free will and psychological determinism and sets forth the notion of a fundamental project. Now, to comprehend this, I will point out the way in which Sartre accepts freedom as self-creation by emphasizing his denial of free will and psychological determinism and the relationship between nothingness and freedom in the light of temporality.

### **5.2.1. Free Will and Psychological Determinism**

In the fourth part of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre discusses the tendencies of the defenders and opponents of free will in order to concretely equate freedom with being-for-itself in terms of the original project. To this extent, he analyzes how the concepts of the act, motive, and cause are defined in the theories of determinists and libertarians. As a matter of fact, he suggests that the notion of intentionality includes the concept of the act in which the meaning of cause and motive resides. Action is fundamentally intentional in the sense that "to act is to modify the *shape* of the world; it is to arrange means in view of an end" (Sartre, 1978, p.433). As it follows from the fact that being-for-itself performs its power of nihilation in its directedness toward the world and intentionality assumes to be detached from the intended object, no factual situation can determine or motivate the act of consciousness. In this respect, according to Sartre, intentionality refers to the possibility of consciousness constantly breaking itself away from its past so as to realize the past in terms of a non-being and "so as to be able to confer on it the meaning which it has in terms of

the project of a meaning which it does not have” (Sartre, 1978, p.436). Hence, the act is produced by consciousness that is not its past and is what it is not. This implies the crucial point to see what is missing in the claims of determinists and the advocates of free will. The former believes that an action is necessarily conditioned by a specific cause while the latter considers two opposite actions as equally possible because they also accept the motives and causes of these actions as equal. Here, Sartre does not deny the strict connection between the action and cause, but he endorses that in intentionality each action posits an end and the end becomes the cause of the action:

Such indeed is the unity of the three temporal ekstases; the end or temporalization of my future implies a cause (or motive); that is, it points toward my past, and the present is the upsurge of the act. To speak of an act without a cause is to speak of an act which would lack the intentional structure of every act; and the proponents of free will by searching for it on the level of the act which is in the process of being performed can only end up by rendering the act absurd. But the determinists in turn are weighting the scale by stopping their investigation with the mere designation of the cause and motive. (Sartre, 1978, pp.436-437)

Given this, for Sartre, the relation of a cause to an action stems from the very nature of intentionality. For there to be a cause, the for-itself must flee from the in-itself by nihilating itself toward its possibilities. Thus, the motives and causes acquire their meaning only in the act of nihilation which assumes the pure temporalization of the for-itself for the sake of to be itself. He prominently illustrates this with the following words:

If I accept a niggardly salary it is doubtless because of fear; and fear is a motive. But it is *fear of dying from starvation*; that is, this fear has meaning only outside itself in an end ideally posited, which is the preservation of a life which I apprehend as "in danger." And this fear is understood in turn only in relation to the value which I implicitly give to this life; that is, it is referred to that hierarchal system of ideal objects which are values. (Sartre, 1978, p.437)

In this framework, Sartre insists that there is no causal relationship between the motive and act, that is, they do not externally affect each other. The motive stands for a complementary component of the act to project the end; these three elements dwell in the organic unity in which each establishes the meaning of the others. Then, the

formed totality of the act, the motive, and the end cannot be expressed by separating one from the other two as if there is an external link between them. They are organically formed under the upsurge of the for-itself as temporalizing through nihilating the in-itself. Because this nihilation is the freedom of the for-itself, Sartre asserts that freedom is the condition of this formed totality. Freedom reveals itself as an act, “and we ordinarily attain it across the act which it organizes with the causes, motives, and ends which the act implies” (Sartre, 1978, p.438). Therefore, freedom is not an attribute attached to human nature; rather it is the very essence of human existence. That is to say, it is the way in which I exist in the world. Insofar as it is my being, I am by its own nature conscious of freedom. “I am indeed an existent who learns his freedom through his acts, but I am also an existent whose individual and unique existence temporalizes itself as freedom” (Sartre, 1978, p.439).

Accordingly, Sartre refuses determinism and free will by approaching the concept of motive and will in a radical way. He announces that determinism ultimately tries to identify the mode of being-for-itself as the non-ekstatic structure of being-in-itself. Without any interval, determinism establishes continuity between the act and decision by considering the motive as a psychic phenomenon with its full reality. On this ground, determinist theories affirm that the motive arouses the act as in the case of the cause brings about its effect. In this articulation, the motive, the decision, and the act are all regarded as psychic realities that are subject to the fullness of being-in-itself. As everything is complete and perfect, the relationship between the motive and the act can be conceived in terms of the cause-effect relationship that is already made without any awareness of it. In this context, determinism tries to “give an essence to the for-itself” (Sartre, 1978, p.440). However, freedom is the nothingness of human reality. Sartre recognizes that the perfect continuum, that is, the mechanical order posited by determinism falls at the onset of anguish. A human being is free because it is never complete; it is always in the mode of making itself by being “separated by a nothingness from what it is and from what it will be” (Sartre, 1978, p.440). In this context, by means of its nothingness, the human being ruptures itself from the set of causal relations. Furthermore, within the same emphasis, Sartre denies the restriction

of freedom to the concept of will in terms of voluntary acts. He points out that the will does not stand for a unique indication of freedom since it must assume original freedom in order to establish itself as a will. That is to say, the will does not have the power to create free acts and thus to define ends on its own; rather it is related to these ends in a reflective fashion: “it decrees that the pursuit of these ends will be reflective and deliberative” (Sartre, 1978, p.443). Since freedom is the existence of the for-itself, the ends can only be constituted by original freedom. Therefore, the will exists in freedom as being determined “within the compass of motives and ends already posited by the for-itself in a transcendent projection of itself toward its possibles” (Sartre, 1978, p.444). Like passions and volitions, the will is considered as a subjective fact in the attitudes of libertarians. However, since the for-itself is a selfless nothingness, it is the free ground of its volitions, passions, and will. Consequently, “all my ‘modes of being’ manifest freedom equally since they are all ways of being my own nothingness” (Sartre, 1978, p.445).

### **5.2.2. Nothingness and Freedom: Self is a Project**

As declared above, by focusing on the ontological structure of being-for-itself, Sartre identifies freedom as being one with the nothingness of the for-itself and eliminates the theories of free will and psychological determinism. He ultimately formulates that the human being is free in the sense that it exists as nothingness; it does not possess any defined content or essence from whatever source. According to him, the three extents in which the for-itself must be its own nothingness under the activity of nihilation reveal the true nature of freedom. Through these nihilating acts, consciousness is free to go beyond what is endowed to it. Firstly, by temporalizing itself, it freely carries out any particular act without allowing it to be determined by its past. Since it always distances itself from itself in the mode of temporality, its past cannot affect the act it performs. Secondly, by being conscious of something and at the same time of itself, that is, by existing as pre-reflective consciousness without including a self, it autonomously and spontaneously motivates itself without being

affected of any external factors. Finally, because it is transcendence, it does not exist first as something then posits itself in relation to a particular end, however, it is fundamentally a being that is a project in the sense that its end defines itself. In this respect, Sartre illuminates his notion of freedom under the nothingness of consciousness:

An existent which as consciousness is necessarily separated from all others because they are in connection with it only to the extent that they are for it, an existent which decides its past in the form of a tradition in the light of its future instead of allowing it purely and simply to determine its present, an existent which makes known to itself what it is by means of something other than it (that is, by an end which it is not and which it projects from the other side of the world) - this is what we call a free existent. (Sartre, 1978, p.453)

Therefore, consciousness' existence as nothingness discloses the inevitability and absoluteness of freedom. Because consciousness is nothing, it always makes itself by disassociating itself from what it is exposed to. This precisely means that, by always being in the mode of making itself through its power of nihilation, consciousness is always taking its existence as an issue. In this sense, Sartre articulates that even though our past becomes being-in-itself, that is, brute and inert existence, it cannot have influence upon our present and future acts because we are separated from our past with nothingness. In each of our acts, we over and over create what we are owing to our absolute freedom. Hence, as McInerney points out, there are two primary qualities of absolute freedom which Sartre regards "to be an intrinsic component of human existence: (1) that what we want to do is not causally determined by antecedent factors, and (2) that what we want to do is continuously produced by us" (McInerney, 1982, p.102). In this context, Sartre establishes the relation of freedom to nothingness by emphasizing two critical points which signify the very nature of consciousness, that is, its being a project. McInerney formulates them as follows: first, our desire to do something is not subject to causal determination because "external factors in our environment can serve as reasons for doing some action only if we have certain more general goals (ends) to be accomplished" (McInerney, 1982, p.102) and second, our desire to do something is continuously forming us since "human exists only through the upsurge of ends"

(McInerney, 1982, p.102). Thus, the projection of ends originates from consciousness' denial of the situation. Further, the production of ends in a temporal form stems from the continual process of nihilation. More precisely, the very nature of being-for-itself's existence lies under the surpassing power of its past to be always in the process of making. With the following words, Daigle explicates this point:

Consciousness never really corresponds to itself. It is never what it is: it is temporal and it is free, so always in the making. As it exists, the for-itself surpasses its past and its situation. It is a project, i.e. a being that has a past as an essence but that is always transcending that past. (Daigle, 2010, p.45)

Since I bring my past with me, it constitutes my situation. Nevertheless, I transcend it in the sense that I am not compelled to it; I always determine myself in spite of my past. The issue of causality is applied to the act of consciousness when these acts are conceived as successive. However, something in my past awareness cannot motivate my present awareness. For this reason, unlike the world of objects, being-for-itself is not subject to causal determination. The past can be the reason for the action of the for-itself only under the fundamental choice of the for-itself. That is to say, I am separated from my past with nothingness because I am a project of myself through being ahead of given situation. In other words, I am a project that "*pre-outlines* me in terms of the concrete situation as in addition it illumines the situation in terms of my choice" (Sartre, 1978, p.553).

By specifying freedom through nothingness, Sartre demonstrates that the factual conditions, that is, the ways in which I find myself in the world, cannot determine my action. In my existence, I am always already in a situation and there is no freedom which is not situated as I am in the world. In this respect, Sartre realizes that there are inevitable, that is, unchangeable circumstances such as the place and date of birth, the body, and the gender that result from my being-in-the-world. Yet, he states that these factors cannot be effective in my decision and action in the sense that the meaning of them is what I choose. I am who give meaning to them. Even though I cannot change my facticity, I can change my attitude towards it. At this point, my being a project establishes my facticity in a situation since what I consider as valuable is related to my ideal self. The principle of consciousness, without any

essence, is to devise itself by attempting upon the world through freely chosen decisions, actions, and feelings:

Without facticity consciousness could choose its attachments to the world in the same way as the souls in Plato's *Republic* choose their condition. I could determine myself to "be born a worker" or to "be born a bourgeois." But on the other hand facticity cannot constitute me as being a bourgeois or being a worker. It is not even strictly speaking a resistance of fact since it is only by recovering it the substructure of the pre-reflective that I confer on it its meaning and its resistance. Facticity is only one indication which I give myself of the being to which I must reunite myself in order to be what I am. (Sartre, 1978, p.83)

Here, Sartre emphasizes that, by being prior to the ego, a free consciousness engages in a withstanding world through its unlimited power of negation. In fact, this is the crucial point where freedom gains its meaning. Consciousness does not possess any essence that is determined by the factual contexts to exist in a particular fashion. In the continual process of negation, consciousness contingently and freely finds itself always in the process of making its essence or constructing its ego while engaging in the world. In this context, with the notion of the project, Sartre expresses the connection between freedom and world in terms of consciousness' creative act. It is consciousness as freedom "working on the world (creating it) to realize its own project" (Daigle, 2010, p.47). This is the ontological fact and fundamental structure of human existence. That is to say, freedom does not stand for a tool that a human being exercises to surpass her situation. However, the human being is itself freedom in the sense that "it is not bound by anything, but rather it creates the world freely as this intentional free consciousness that encounters the in-itself" (Daigle, 2010, p.48).

As referred above, the existential ground of the for-itself is its being a project. Concerning this, Sartre tries to demonstrate that single projects are grounded on the fundamental project that constitutes the being-for-itself. By continuously transcending the situation in a future-oriented existence, I determine my life and create myself. All my wishes, feelings, expectations, beliefs, "everyday values, derive their meaning from an original projection of myself which stands as my choice of myself in the world" (Sartre, 1978, p.39). In this sense, my fundamental

project signifies my original and unique choice of myself “in terms of a primary project which is recognized as the project which can no longer be interpreted in terms of any other and which is total” (Sartre, 1978, p.479). Accordingly, in Sartre’s approach, the notion of fundamental project has a transcendental character which reveals the nature of absolute freedom in the sense of self-determination. In other words, as Linsenbard clarifies, my fundamental project conditions my being-in-the-world since “it is the project which makes all of my other projects possible and under which all other projects may be interpreted” (Linsenbard, 2010, p.51). My preliminary choice of myself composes my relation to existence, that is, “my total being-in-the-world” (Sartre, 1978, p.65). In this context, Sartre’s focus on the fundamental project significantly discloses my immediate relation to myself that I concretely and pre-conceptually live; “it is pre-reflective and engaged action shooting out towards a world of possibility (Linsenbard, 2010, p.54). Here, Linsenbard agrees that my fundamental project assumes original temporality with the concrete awareness of freedom as “in pure reflection I do not distract myself from the deepest meaning of my past and present actions, or from the fact that my future could be very different” (Linsenbard, 2010, p.50). As a matter of fact, since it stands for the capability of defining myself through my own choice, reasons, and goals, Sartre refrains from the free will and determinism debate by concentrating on the notion of the fundamental project which announces uniqueness. To this extent, he illuminates the temporal feature of the for-itself and opens a way for his radical conception of freedom in terms of choosing oneself pre-reflectively beyond free will which implies choosing from alternatives. Furthermore, he describes freedom as an original choice in which my reasons, motives, and the meaning of my acts are created. In this light, Crittenden focuses on the relationship between the notion of choice and temporality. He suggests that, under temporality which arises from my act of nihilation, “my-being-in-the-world conceived as a choice – not a particular choice, but the basic or original choice in which I choose myself as a whole in every particular choice” (Crittenden, 2013, p.155). The original choice of the for-itself is its freedom, that is, a continual renovation arising from continual denial of instantaneity because “the for-itself always has the possibility of positing its immediate past as

object and making a new choice of ends in the unity of a single act” (Crittenden, 2013, p.157).

### **5.2.3. Anguish and Freedom**

One of the important aspects of Sartre’s existentialism is that if freedom is not a property of consciousness but the being of consciousness, then consciousness should be aware of its being, that is, freedom. As declared in the discussion of free will and psychological determinism, freedom evinces itself to reflective consciousness in the experience of anguish. To clarify that freedom is at the heart of this acute experience, Sartre distinguishes anguish from fear. While fear is experienced through the objects in the world, that is, someone or something, anguish corresponds to human being’s power to do something one way or another. By following Kierkegaard, Sartre remarks that “vertigo is anguish to the extent that I am afraid not of falling over the precipice, but of throwing myself over” (Sartre, 1978, p.29). Precisely speaking, in anguish, I experience that my act does not emerge as determined by anything like in the case of the world of objects; rather I am the source of my act. To exemplify this, he introduces the case of vertigo at the edge of an abyss. When I walk near an abyss, I am afraid of falling down. At this point, vertigo presents itself through my fear because I sense that I passively belong to the world of objects in which determinism prevails. Insofar as I am a thing among the objects that are subject to a cause-effect relationship, I fear slipping and falling from the abyss. In this regard, “fear is unreflective apprehension of the transcendent” (Sartre, 1978, p.30). Yet, anguish comes to the scene when I ask myself how to act. This means that, in anguish, I face myself as not a being but as nothing. Anguish arises when I face the fact that I am the only one who will make the decision without being subject to anything. That is to say, possibilities are projected by freedom itself and anguish is the awareness of it. It is possible to protect myself from falling or to distract my attention from fear. Nevertheless, it is also possible to throw myself off the abyss. All these acts are

possible, and it is up to me to choose one of them and bring it into existence. Since they are my possibilities, nothing can force me to act this or that way:

Yet I am indeed already there in the future; it is for the sake of that being which I will be there at the turning of the path that I now exert all my strength, and in this sense there is already a relation between my future being and my present being. But nothingness has slipped into the heart of this relation; I am not the self which I will be. First I am not that self because time separates me from it. Secondly, I am not that self because what I am is not the foundation of what I will be. Finally I am not that self because no actual existent can determine strictly what I am going to be. (Sartre, 1978, pp.31-32)

In this context, by focusing on possibilities, Sartre insists that freedom is not a matter of choosing one of the available possibilities and making it my own; rather it is a matter of bringing that possible choice into the view. This means that freedom is a way in which a world is made up in correlation to myself.

With the example of the abyss, Sartre explains the experience of anguish toward the future. Moreover, his illustration of the gambler who faithfully decides not to gamble anymore reveals the relationship between anguish and freedom “in the face of the past” (Sartre, 1978, p.32). When the gambler comes to the playing table his decisiveness dissolves. He accordingly finds himself free to gamble or not so that he has to make a new decision at that moment. In doing so, he re-experiences the fear of deteriorating his financial situation or upsetting his family. Because of the fact that his previous decision does not influence his new decision, the gambler rediscovers these fears. In this sense, Sartre claims that nothing in the past which had happened can give a hand to what I am going to do now. Therefore, what the gambler “apprehends in anguish is precisely the total inefficacy of the past resolution” (Sartre, 1978, p.33). His consciousness of freedom reveals itself in the manner of consciousness of anguish in which he faces with his possibility of gambling or not:

After having patiently built up barriers and walls, after enclosing myself in the magic circle of a resolution, I perceive with anguish that nothing prevents me from gambling. The anguish is me since by the very fact of taking my position in existence as consciousness of being, I make myself not to be the past of good resolutions which I am. (Sartre, 1978, p.33)

Here, similar to the experience of anguish towards the future, Sartre intends to bring the relationship between consciousness and ego to the fore with the example of the gambler. According to him, we experience anguish because consciousness is nothingness, non-ego-centered, thus, contentless. That is to say, anguish is the realization of the fact that I have to make my own essence; I have to determine myself without appealing to any pre-defined values, aims, actions, motives, etc. All of them find their ground in my constituting my essence, that is, my self-determination. Thus, anguish is “the recognition of a possibility as my possibility; that is, it is constituted when consciousness sees itself cut from its essence by nothingness or separated from the future by its very freedom” (Sartre, 1978, p.35). Given this, to explicate the absolute freedom in terms of self-determination, Sartre formulates the connection between nothingness and anguish through consciousness’ power of nihilation in two manners:

- (1) Consciousness is not its own motive inasmuch as it is empty of all content. This refers us to a nihilating structure of the pre-reflective cogito.
- (2) Consciousness confronts its past and its future as facing a self which it is in the mode of not-being. This refers us to a nihilating structure of temporality. (Sartre, 1978, p.34)

In that regard, he points out that anguish discloses the true nature of human existence in terms of transcendence. However, as being a reflective preservation against anguish, free will and psychological determinism reduce me to what I am by introducing the fullness of being-in-itself to me. In this attitude, I specify myself in terms of the objects that do not temporalize and I understand that the meaning of the world originates from the world itself without me to compose my responsibility. Far from it, “in anguish I apprehend myself at once as totally free and as not being able to derive the meaning of the world except as coming from myself” (Sartre, 1978, p.40). In the upshot, according to Sartre, I comprehend myself as freedom in anguish in the sense that my world is constituted in correlation to myself. By being free, I am the only one who gives to the world its meaningful context.

### **5.3. The Implications of Sartre's Criticism of Bergson: Philosophy of Life, Phenomenology, and Existentialism**

Beyond the discussion of freedom under determinism and free will, freedom reveals itself as the spontaneous creation of self in Bergson's and Sartre's accounts. In this direction, I tried to explicate this issue within the key notions of these two philosophical approaches. As we have seen, Bergson's and Sartre's radical attitudes towards time significantly shed light on our understanding of freedom in terms of self-creation. Moreover, along with the qualitative conception of time, their views on consciousness and selfhood have an important role in drawing the portrait of freedom beyond voluntary and involuntary acts or decisions. However, although they dwell in the same strategy, that is, formulating freedom within the relationship between heterogeneous time, consciousness, and self, the differences brought by their philosophical stances allow us to compare the theme of self-creation under the framework of the philosophy of life and existential phenomenology. Accordingly, in this section, by presenting this comparison through Sartre's critique of Bergson, I aim to illuminate the different horizons disclosed by existential phenomenology and philosophy of life in the context of freedom. On the one side, Bergsonian freedom principally signifies a return to the creative power of inner life by making the world a limiting concept that belongs to mechanical and spatial order. On the other side, in Sartre's treatment, freedom emerges as a self-determination through the correlation of the world and the ego. In order to compare these two approaches that I have built on freedom, I will first present the relationship between time and consciousness with a comparative reading on duration and original temporality. In this context, I will dwell on the way in which Sartre differentiates his idea of original temporality from duration. Admittedly, this focus will serve us to elaborate on the existential outline of Sartre's remark on consciousness and the ego, within a strict connection to temporality, as different from Bergson's formulation of duration. In this light, as an important point of comparison, secondly, I will speak of the existential implication of self-creation, that is, self-determination which stands out from a phenomenological perspective. In the upshot, apart from the inner creativity of life and the self, which I

specified in the third chapter by introducing Bergson's theory of evolution, this will help to figure out in what respect freedom gains its existential character through the constitution of the world and the ego in Sartre's inquiry.

### **5.3.1. Duration vs. Original Temporality**

In Bergson's philosophy, the notion of duration stands for the root of freedom. On the contrary, Sartre sees freedom as the source of temporalizing power of consciousness. From Sartre's perspective, to assert that consciousness is nothingness is tantamount to saying that on the ground of the existence of consciousness there is absolute freedom. In this respect, to demonstrate the contrast between Bergson and Sartre, Bouton pays attention to the relationship between time and freedom. He claims that Sartre's disagreement with Bergson "comes down to his having defined freedom in terms of time, while what he ought to have done is to define time in terms of freedom" (Bouton, 2014, p.228). According to Sartre, because consciousness is not a being-in-itself but exists as pure intentionality and in the mode of being-for-itself, it autonomously and spontaneously motivates itself in constructing its world and its ego through temporalizing itself. However, in Bergson's understanding, duration as consciousness is an inventive totality in which the self and its states of mind flourish together. That is to say, the ego is given to consciousness as an inseparable totality of the states and actions. Just as each moment represents the organic whole in duration, the self as a concrete totality appears at every state or action. Bouton summarizes this comparison with the following words:

With Bergson, freedom consists in coinciding with pure duration, which is the fundamental given, making the free act possible as the tree does fruit. In Sartre's eyes, this temporal freedom is certainly unpredictable, but it is too reassuring, for it establishes a relation of similarity between the ego and its act comparable to that between the father and his child. (Bouton, 2014, p.228)

To this extent, for Sartre, by grounding freedom in the process of duration, Bergson restrains its negation and overshadows the power of time. Yet, freedom has to be regarded as the primordial negativity of being-for-itself to brighten that power. Thus,

in Sartre, time has its source in freedom but not the opposite. In my opinion, this is the critical point where the difference between Bergson's and Sartre's conceptions of freedom is based on. Along with his critique of Bergson, from this point of view, Sartre develops his idea of absolute freedom and radicalizes Bergson's self-creation as self-determination.

As stated before, by separating duration from spatial time, Bergson endorses that there are two aspects of the self. The deeper self, in pre-reflective level, intuitively interpenetrates its conscious states, that is, the pure succession in which the past fuses with the present. That is to say, in contrast to the external self that lives in homogeneous time with its intelligence, by living in duration, the deeper self participates in the flow of life and immediately experiences the interfusion of the states of consciousness that form a qualitative multiplicity. For Bergson, in this experience, the self is never indifferent to the flow and consciousness: it concretely and pre-objectively dwells in the inner evolution of duration. In this respect, Breuer points out Bergson's emphasis on the intimacy of the ego by defining freedom as arising out of inner process in which the self, states, and motives are merged:

This intuition and coincidence with the deeper self is what Bergson considers to be the condition of freedom. I am free when I completely coincide with that inner duration, when I am thus completely myself and when my act reflects my being, when my act totally emerges out of my real self, and not out of any social pressure. I am what I do and think. I am my choices. I recognize myself in them: no space distances my acts from the inner self... My decisions do not presuppose an ego who would choose between objectified motives. Every unity, sentiment, decision, motive, state, etc. represents the whole from which it emanates. (Breuer, 2001, p.184)

The important point here is that, for Bergson, by being immersed in consciousness, the self spontaneously realizes itself within its every act born out of the inner dynamism of duration. From a phenomenological perspective, Sartre characterizes this qualitative multiplicity, which gives rise to the spontaneous creation of self, as a corrupt spontaneity because duration is contrary to pure consciousness whose very nature is nothingness. Since Bergson asserts a self that is immanent to consciousness, according to Sartre, his theory of duration does not define pure consciousness but the

blurred, psychic consciousness. In that regard, by bringing the ontological structure of being-for-itself to the fore, Sartre rejects the continual organization of duration. For him, Bergson's account of consciousness does not justify the penetration of the past to the present because it does not presuppose an organizer that temporalizes through its separation from itself with nothingness. Here, Sartre's critique concentrates on two main points. Firstly, the involvement of the 'I' in duration introduces passivity and opacity to the real spontaneity of consciousness. Secondly, as it follows from this, the parts that are intertwined in duration flow into each other in an inexplicable harmony without being grounded in the absolute structure of being-for-itself:

For if the Past, as he maintains, is inactive, it can only remain behind and will never come to penetrate the present in the form of memory unless a present being has undertaken to exist as well ekstasically in the Past. Of course, with Bergson, it is indeed one and the same being which endures. But that makes one realize all the more the need for ontological elucidations. For we do not know finally, if it is the being which endures or if it is duration which is being. And if duration is being, then Bergson must tell us what is the ontological structure of duration; and if, on the contrary, it is being which endures, he must show us what it is in being which permits it to endure. (Sartre, 1978, p.135)

In order to overcome this difficulty, Sartre proposes to conceive temporality as both a unifying act and a dissolving power. When these two facets of temporality, that is, the multiplicity and the unity of duration, are separated from each other, we cannot see the oneness of time and how time multiplies itself. For there to be a multiplicity in unity and unity in a multiplicity, "temporality can be only a relation of being at the heart of this same being" (Sartre, 1978, p.136). On the ground of the definite structure of a being, temporality serves as an intrinsic relationship between before and after. Here, Sartre refers to the certain mode of being, that is, being-for-itself to stress the linkage between nothingness and the power of temporalizing. Since the for-itself perpetually exists as outside of itself, "before" and "after" are constituted through the for-itself's way of existence, that is, coming into being as the nihilation of being-in-itself:

Temporality exists only as the intra-structure of a being which has to be its own being; that is, as the intra-structure of a For-itself. Not that the For-itself has an ontological priority over temporality. But Temporality is the being of the For-itself in so far as the For-itself has to be its being ekstastically. Temporality is not, but the For-itself temporalizes itself by existing. (Sartre, 1978, p.136)

Like Bergson, Sartre specifies time as subjective reality. However, by making a distinction between original temporality and psychic temporality, he attempts to clarify why the theory of duration is inadequate to show the real time as qualitative temporality and its relation to freedom. In his opinion, while original temporality refers to the ekstastic nature of being-for-itself, Bergson's duration indicates psychic temporality that consists of successive 'nows'. For Sartre, this means that there is no movement in this multiplicity of succession because it is cut off from the future. Since Bergson characterizes consciousness as a full entity in the mode of being-in-itself, duration becomes a motionless datum "which undergoes its intimate cohesion without effecting it, which is perpetually temporalized without temporalizing itself" (Sartre, 1978, p.167). For this reason, the psychic duration cannot be a spontaneous act as long as it is constituted of already established 'nows' in which "the future can be only as a past which will come after the present past; that is, the empty form before-after is hypostasized" (Sartre, 1978, p.170). In this empty form, there is no internal bond between the past, the present, and the future but a magical fusion composed of the elements that remotely affect each other. Thus, according to Sartre, Bergson's duration does not correspond to original temporality which means bringing time into being by a temporalizing being. In original temporality, each dimension of time emerges as the nihilating aspect of the for-itself. That is to say, the for-itself, by its very nature, which is nihilating power, sprinkles itself into the three dimensions of time. In this sense, temporality is nothing but a continuous flight from the in-itself:

As Present, Past, Future- all at the same time- the For-itself dispersing its being in three dimensions is temporal due to the very fact that it nihilates itself. No one of these dimensions has any ontological priority over the other; none of them can exist without the other two... Thus Temporality is not a universal time containing all beings and in particular human realities. Neither

is it a law of development which is imposed on being from without. Nor is it being. But it is the intra-structure of the being which is its own nihilation- that is, the mode being peculiar to being-for-itself. The For-itself is the being which has to be its being in the diasporatic form of Temporality. (Sartre, 1978, p.142)

In this framework, Sartre argues that Bergson places duration in a psychological consciousness that is different from consciousness as being-for-itself. Since there is no deficiency in Bergson's account of consciousness, it is not possible for the past to come from behind and penetrate the present. In fact, that is why Sartre rejects temporal continuity and asserts that temporality arises out of the nothingness that constantly haunts being. In other words, the reason my being does not identify with the past is not that I am a constant flux, but that my consciousness is a continual escape as it is separated from itself by nothingness. Therefore, "the time of consciousness is human reality which temporalizes itself as the totality which is to itself its own incompleteness; it is nothingness slipping into a totality as a detotalizing ferment" (Sartre, 1978, p.149). The attempt of consciousness to be fully present to itself in an instant always fails, and this failure is the temporality of fleeing consciousness that moves from the past into the future by nihilating itself. In this regard, it can be articulated that Bergson takes a radical approach to explain consciousness and freedom by opposing homogeneous time with duration. Rather than this, what Sartre problematizes is the existence of being-for-itself in its absolute freedom. Precisely speaking, to understand the nature of the for-itself's existence, Sartre defines temporality as constituting the inner structure of being-for-itself. For him, the human reality is conceived as temporal and the meaning of transcendence reveals itself in temporality. At this point, Breuer's formulation of Bergson's and Sartre's accounts of consciousness and transcendence, in a sense, illuminates the distinction between duration and original temporality in the context of nothingness:

For Bergson, transcendence is an emanation of the inner pre-reflective organization. This interiority recognizes itself in the act. But for Sartre, self-consciousness cannot motivate self-transcendence, since it would introduce a passivity into that pure spontaneity or activity. It would make the intentional act dependent on something prior to itself, and thus it would introduce

opacity into the translucent self-consciousness as consciousness of the intentional act. (Breeur, 2001, pp.186-187)

For both thinkers, the problem of time is directly linked to freedom. According to Bergson, our actions are free when they spring from duration that reflects our whole personality. This means that freedom originates from duration. Yet, for Sartre, on the ground of temporalizing power of consciousness lies its absolute freedom. To this extent, their understanding of the future in a way discloses this fundamental difference. On the one side, the future for Bergson is what we incline towards: it is uncertain. In this uncertainty, we create our future with our free acts that stem from the heterogeneous duration in which our states of consciousness permeate one another. On the other side, in Sartre's account, in the present, we are our future in the mode of not being it because the future creates our possibilities. In this respect, according to Sartre, the future is not uncertain in the sense that we should know the possibilities to constitute ourselves by inclining towards the past from the future. That is to say, the future stands for the concrete and dynamic projection of ourselves in terms of 'possibilization' because "the For-itself has to be its being instead of simply being it" (Sartre, 1978, p.126). From this point of view, Sartre constructs the relationship between temporality and freedom. Consciousness, that is, being-for-itself is thrown into existence without any essence. It is an incomplete being that has to realize itself. This means that, within its own possibilities, being-for-itself comes to existence beyond being-in-itself. In a word, "I project myself toward the Future in order to merge there with that which I lack; that is, with that which if synthetically added to my Present would make me be what I am" (Sartre, 1978, p.127).

After all, Sartre's critique of duration from a phenomenological perspective leads him to put forward the original temporality that accords with existential freedom in the sense of self-determination. What is at issue here is the difference between the philosophy of life and phenomenology which emerges from Sartre's theory of consciousness. By defining consciousness as nothingness, in his interpretation of Bergson, Sartre ignores the flow of life and the continuity of duration. However, by identifying duration whose essence is incessant flux with filled consciousness,

Bergson depicts freedom through the creative power of life. In this context, in order to discuss these two attitudes in a broader sense, in the view of philosophy that prioritizes life, Bergson's idea of evolution sheds light on the notion of freedom in terms of self-creation. As I emphasized in the third chapter, in Bergson's philosophy of life, duration as the time of the universe acquires its ontological status with the theory of evolution. Now, I argue that this also explicates what it means for a self to exist in the flow of life as different from Sartre's phenomenological philosophy that investigates the being-in-the-world.

### **5.3.2. The Self-World Correlation: The Constitution of Me and My World**

In opposition to Bergson's attempt to disclose the true nature of freedom in terms of the process of the becoming, which is identical to the creativity of life, Sartre brings the concept of the world to the fore to illuminate radical freedom. On this ground, apart from the notion of inner time or deeper self, the fundamental theme that is running throughout his philosophy is the constitution of the I and the world from a phenomenological perspective. This means that freedom in Sartre signifies the self-world correlation. I argue that, with the notion of absolute freedom, Sartre tries to overcome Bergson's notion of gradual freedom that arises from the distinction between duration and spatial time, that is, the inner self and superficial self. In other words, by grounding consciousness and temporality in freedom, Sartre puts forward that the self is not distinguished into two aspects, one enduring in life and the other being subject to the world; rather the self is constituted together with its world through the activity of consciousness, that is, intentionality. More precisely, in contrast to Bergsonian freedom, Sartre's stress on intentionality as the structure of consciousness defines his approach to freedom in the context of the self-world correlation. In this regard, Henry Somers-Hall considers intentionality as the crucial point where Sartre's account of freedom differs from Bergson's account by claiming that "at the heart of Sartre's move away from Bergson is Husserl's idea that consciousness is an intentional relationship towards an object" (Somers-Hall, 2017,

p.98). While freedom, for Bergson, is a matter of immersion into the inner dynamism of life that takes place in the interpenetrated multiplicity of conscious states, for Sartre, it is instead primarily connected to “viewing the world as structured in terms of our practical concerns” (Somers-Hall, 2017, p.104). Consciousness as nothingness practically organizes its individual projects by its intentional acts towards the world of objects. The world and ‘I’ are correlatively constituted under this spontaneous activity as “the meaning of our past and present will be determined by these future projects” (Somers-Hall, 2017, p.104). In Bergson’s account, our intellect determines the world as composed of wide apart entities to ensure practical engagement. However, in Sartre, our being-in-the-world is organized by the fundamental project of the individual that involves practical interests. Thus, as Somers-Hall agrees, the situation is “no longer tied to the species for Sartre, nor even to the individual, but rather to the specific project of the individual, a project that is open to rejection and substitution at any moment” (Somers-Hall, 2017, p.105). That is to say, for Sartre, absolute freedom means the appreciation of the possibility of other situations whereas, for Bergson, freedom is only feasible by returning to the flow of life that is purified from the practical concerns of the world. In this context, Somers-Hall suggests that Sartre inverts Bergson’s statement of freedom:

For Bergson, it is in recognizing the value of the deep self that we are truly free. For Sartre, on the contrary, freedom is tied to the power of the imaginary to institute a radical decompression of being, fragmenting the inherent unity of the world into a field of pragmatic and instrumental relations. (Somers-Hall, 2017, p.105)

The significant point here that reveals Sartre’s approach is that freedom is the self’s choice of itself in the world along with the exploration of the world as a totality. Accordingly, Sartre states that there is a world because the self abruptly arises into the world in unity. As coming from the ontological structure of being-for-itself, the world is opening in and through the upsurge of consciousness, that is, nihilations in which the self and the world correlatively appear as a totality:

Thus, the first phenomenon of being in the world is the original relation between the totality of the in-itself or world and my own totality detotalized; I choose myself as a whole in the world which is a whole. Just as I come from

the world to a particular "this," so I come from myself as a detotalized totality to the outline of one of my particular possibilities since I can apprehend a particular "this" on the ground of the world only on the occasion of a particular project of myself. (Sartre, 1978, p.461)

In this sense, what Sartre emphasizes is that on the ground of freedom which signifies consciousness' power of upsurge through the nihilation of the in-itself, the world as the unity comes into existence in correlation with the eventual possibility of the self as the genuine totality of its whole specific possibilities. Precisely speaking, by choosing itself, the self chooses the world in its meaningful context that is surrounded with the possibilities of the self rather than choosing the world in its structure of being-in-itself. That is to say, the order of the world is me; it is the projection of myself.

Accordingly, I claim that Sartre's notion of choice, which implies the self-world correlation, allows us to formulate freedom in terms of self-determination as an existentialist version of Bergson's self-creation. Under the self-determination of the for-itself, the self is continually engaged in its choice and it is always conscious of the possibility of altering this choice since "our existential freedom perpetually eats it away as we make known to ourselves what we are by means of the future but without getting a grip on this future which remains always possible" (Sartre, 1978, p.465). Jonathan Webber clarifies this point by stating that the tenet of Sartre's radical freedom lies in our way of existence in which we can never take flight from choosing ourselves:

This kind of existence includes freedom because the ways in which the world seems to us, the ways in which we think and feel about it, and the ways in which we behave in response to it are all ultimately manifestations of projects that we have chosen to pursue, that we need not have chosen, and that each of us can yet choose to change. (Webber, 2009, p.59)

Therefore, Sartre's existentialism asserts that we are constructing reality in the sense that it is I who makes reality into value in a unique way by choosing itself and projecting itself into the world. This is contingent because I can choose differently by creating different synthesis. In this case, I choose a new world; I make new synthetic ties. This signifies how I find my existence in the world. At every instant, "I

apprehend this initial choice as contingent and unjustifiable; at each moment therefore, I am on the site suddenly to consider it objectively and consequently to surpass it and to make-it-past by causing the liberating instant to arise” (Sartre, 1978, p. 475). Although what I am engaged in is contingent, I am necessarily engaged. I can never justify all my choices, but I am responsible for them as I am burdened with freedom. Therefore, in Sartre’s account, as Webber points out, the term ‘radical’ implies the deepness of freedom rather than its range. Our acts are absolutely free because “they are ultimately rooted in our projects, which are themselves freely chosen and maintained” (Webber, 2009, p.62). In this context, Sartre’s definition of existentialism, which principally asserts that existence precedes essence, brings together his notions of the self-world correlation and self-determination under the theme of radical freedom. In *Existentialism is Humanism*, he announces that there is no God-given, that is, inherent essence to human beings inasmuch as nothing is immanent to being-for-itself. Before anything else, a human being purely exists. After confronting itself by being engaged in the world, it chooses itself therefore defines itself. That is to say, before the self projects itself into the future, “nothing exists, not even in divine intelligence, and the man shall attain existence only when he is what he projects himself to be -not what he would like to be” (Sartre, 2007, p.23). Within self-determination, a human being is in total responsibility as well as in absolute freedom because its free acts are not established by a will that refers to a decision which is taken after human’s making itself. In this respect, Sartre argues that all the acts of human being manifests “of an earlier and more spontaneous choice that what is known as will” (Sartre, 2007, p. 23). In the context of responsibility and freedom, the spontaneity of self-determination also signifies a crucial point that leads Sartre to identify existentialism with humanism. Since a human being realizes itself by existing outside of itself, it is a gist of transcendence in which the world of objects is perceived in connection with human being’s projection of itself. Hence, for Sartre, the universe stands for human subjectivity and existentialism denotes humanism in the sense that a human is not enclosed in itself but presents itself to a universe:

This link between transcendence as constitutive of man (not in the sense that God is transcendent, but in the sense that man passes beyond himself) and

subjectivity (in the sense that man is not an island unto himself but always present in a human universe) is what we call “existentialist humanism”. This is humanism because we remind man that there is no legislator other than himself and that he must, in his abandoned state, make his own choices, and also because we show that it is not by turning inward, but by constantly seeking a goal outside of himself in the form of liberation, or of some special achievement, that man will realize himself as truly human. (Sartre, 2007, pp.52-53)

In brief, like Bergson, Sartre discusses freedom concerning qualitative time, that is, temporality. However, as it stems from his phenomenology in which the ontological structure of being-for-itself is established, the issue of freedom in Sartre reveals itself with its existential dimension. Radical freedom has an existential implication in the sense that the self is constructed by consciousness in correlation with its world through spontaneous and contingent choices which manifest the projection of the self into the future. In this context, we inquire into the transformation of Bergson’s notion of freedom in terms of self-creation in line with the creative flow of life into an account of self-determination in Sartre’s approach. This transformation is important as it signifies how existential phenomenology differs from the philosophy of life in the context of freedom. That is to say, by characterizing consciousness as an ekstatic being that temporalizes itself, Sartre eliminates Bergson’s central idea of inner dynamism that runs through the evolutionary movement of life. In doing so, he discloses the phenomenological and existentialist significance of absolute freedom in which consciousness constitutes itself and its world by choosing itself under the burden of responsibility.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In this study, I tried to elucidate that the spontaneity of freedom should be conceptualized as self-creation (self-determination) in Bergson's and Sartre's philosophy in relation to their qualitative understanding of time. On this ground, to demonstrate their formulation of freedom beyond the traditional debate between free will and determinism, I scrutinized their notions of consciousness and self in line with duration and temporality. Throughout my examination, I also offered a comparative reading of these philosophers with an emphasis on Sartre's criticism of Bergson to shed light on the different attitudes of philosophy of life and phenomenology in the context of freedom. In that regard, I argued that while this prominent issue gives us a clue to make sense of how the concepts of life and the world can be interpreted differently, it further discloses how Bergson's idea of self-creation turns into self-determination in Sartre's existential phenomenology.

In Bergson's consideration, freedom comes to the scene in connection with duration that is compatible with the flow of life. As I specified in the second chapter in the light of *Time and Free Will* and *Introduction to Metaphysics*, he explains duration by distinguishing it from spatial time. For him, in contrast to our common understanding of time that is established through the projection into space, duration denotes the true nature of time in which the states of consciousness melt into one another independently of space. Spatial time is defined by him as a homogenous medium in the sense that the modes of time are juxtaposed just as the objects are lined up in space as distinct from each other. In this respect, for Bergson, spatial time is measurable because, through an analogy with space, it is constructed by the intellect to count simultaneous states. In space, by being connected externally, divisible and impenetrable material objects form a quantitative, that is, discontinuous multiplicity

in which each element is regarded as a point. However, duration as a qualitative multiplicity consists of interpenetrated conscious states that reside in pure succession and cannot be objectified unless symbolically represented in space. According to Bergson, this pure succession, which signifies heterogeneity and temporality, inherits an inner dynamism in which conscious states are continually interfused by a new unique formation at every moment. Moreover, since the future is created through the prolongation of the past in the present, the inner generation of duration refers to a creative process of life that can be immediately experienced by the method of intuition. For this reason, Bergson affirms that duration cannot be subject to the intellect's treatments working with analysis. That is to say, in the act of intuition, by coinciding with the dynamic flux of duration, pure consciousness grasps the absolute reality and participates in the flow of life. On the other hand, when it operates with its intelligence, consciousness transforms this inner dynamism into clear-cut distinctions through an analytical process. In doing so, it externalizes interconnected states of mind and projects them into space. Hence, by construing the reality within a spatial composition, the intellect perceives it not from within but from a specific perspective. In this context, for Bergson, duration stands for a heterogeneous multiplicity comprised of intertwined conscious states. In the heterogeneous structure of duration, by causing qualitative changes, the internal differentiations enable a creative process in contrast to the mechanical order of the quantitative multiplicity.

In this light, to demonstrate the relationship between duration and freedom, Bergson assigns a distinction between two aspects of the self in parallel with the difference between duration and homogeneous time. As I declared in the third chapter, by living in a harmony with duration, the fundamental self immediately experiences the flow of life and discovers itself in the process of self-creation whereas the superficial self belongs to the spatial time through its social and practical communication with the external world. That is to say, since it dwells in the concrete integrity of interfused states of consciousness, the fundamental self represents our inner life. On the other side, the superficial self signifies our external side conceived as a component of the outer world for the sake of practical engagements. Thus, the external self

corresponds to the shaped version of the inner self under the limitations of concepts, language, and social interactions. Accordingly, Bergson notices that the problem of freedom is narrowed down into the arguments of free will and determinism because of the fact that it is questioned on the basis of the superficial self and homogenous time. However, as Bergson emphasizes, beyond the libertarian or determinist views committed to the principle of causality, contingency, and prediction, the true nature of freedom manifests itself in the deeper self which experiences the dynamism of life that is intrinsic to duration. All the advocates and opponents of determinism consider time as a homogeneous entity in which the past, the present, and the future are linked to each other through cause-effect relations. In these theories, since duration is neglected, the self is conceptualized as a totality of discrete conscious states. Therefore, the actions of the self are symbolized with clear-cut distinctions detached from the continual organic process from which free act originates.

In my study up to this point, in line with Bergson's path, I tried to explicate what freedom is not through his objections to the spatial conceptualization of time. Accordingly, in sections 3.3 and 3.4, I formulated Bergson's understanding of freedom by concentrating on the origin of free act and self-creation. I tried to show that since a free act stems from a creative process, that is, duration, creativity in Bergson appears as a fundamental tenet of freedom. A free act is the product of the deeper self that intuits its whole personality effectuated by the unique intertwining of psychic states. When the deeper self freely performs its actions, it takes part in the inner growth of duration in which the spontaneous interpenetration of psychic states gives way to the creative process. To this extent, as this process involves a harmonious blend of the past, the present, and the future, the act of the deeper self does not lie behind its future actions, but it creates its entire personality. Hence, in a perpetual state of becoming, along with its free acts born of duration, the self evolves as long as it endures. For Bergson, in this dynamic process of change, the self coincides with the creative power of life and seizes its peculiar individuality purified from the arrangements of the outer world. In this respect, beyond free will and determinism, Bergson's notion of freedom discloses itself in terms of self-

overcoming in the sense that the inner development of duration forms an authentic unity at each moment by being capable of overcoming itself through internal, that is, qualitative changes. What is at issue here is the fact that duration as a self-evolutionary process stands for the genesis of freedom. Because duration is a concrete experience of reality that is incomplete, irreversible, and unpredictable, each act of the self qualitatively diverges from the other. As each moment of duration is a new formation in a constant state of becoming, the self evolves in its free acts. Thus, for Bergson, freedom in the sense of the spontaneous acts of the deeper self originates from the self-modifying dynamism of duration. If freedom means self-creation, as Bergson endorses, then it cannot be absolute; there are degrees of freedom. Creation can only take place in the fundamental self that coincides with its inner life which represents the drives and motives that are unique to it. The acts arising out of this coincidence remove the cause-effect relationships that occur in the social and practical world. However, by submitting to the rules of the spatial order, the acts or decisions of the superficial self pursue the social and practical engagements which exploit necessary stipulations. In this regard, Bergson affirms that the more we withdraw ourselves into mere duration that endures in the depth of our consciousness, the more we intuit our freedom as an absolute reality purified from the external world dependent on artificial partitions. Thus, in Bergson's philosophy, which focuses on the concrete and immediate experience of the self dwelling in the flow of life, the world signifies objectification and limiting conceptualization concerning its demolition of the continuity of duration. As a requirement of the practical world, by being projected into space, the self becomes a part of the impersonal realm in its social life. Therefore, it eventually takes place in a discontinuous world in which its acts and choices depend on a pre-determined order. For this reason, Bergson insists that freedom is hidden in the deeper self that creates itself with every action by living intrinsic to its real nature unfolded in the dynamism of duration. From this point of view, while questioning freedom through duration and the deeper self, Bergson addresses the crucial points that will be exposed to Sartre's criticism: the structure of duration, the immanence of the self to consciousness, and non-absolute freedom.

Before elaborating on the comparison between Bergson and Sartre, in the last section of the third chapter, I concentrated on Bergson's theory of evolution to disclose its prominent role in conceiving duration as a time of the universe. For Bergson, to live means to participate in a continual process of becoming, that is, the essence of life that manifests itself as a perpetual creation. In this creative process, by occurring in duration, evolution implies the continuity of qualitative changes in which the original impetus (*élan vital*) actualizes itself into various forms through divisions without having a pre-given layout or a destination. This movement signifies freedom because in the process of actualization, life acts freely to create the new without repetition or purpose. In this context, for Bergson, by utilizing intuition, we immediately seize the most concrete fact of life as inner creativity because the universe endures in duration, like our consciousness.

On the way to absolute freedom, the fourth chapter investigated Sartre's phenomenological ontology to lay a ground for his critique of Bergson and the notion of temporality that he introduces in the context of freedom. For this purpose, to explicate his ontological scheme, along with the concepts of intentionality, nothingness, and transcendence, I analyzed the structure of being-for-itself in the light of *Being and Nothingness* and *The Transcendence of the Ego*. By investigating being through a phenomenological approach, Sartre realizes that consciousness exists in the mode of being-for-itself, and as fundamentally distinct from being-in-itself which is simply what it is. In opposition to the self-identical and self-contained nature of being-in-itself, being-for-itself evermore exists as separate from itself. As an incomplete mode of being, it always struggles to make itself in order to come across itself. For Sartre, in experience, consciousness is involved in a dynamic activity in which it is always related to the world by transcending its being. In contrast to the objects in the world, that is, being-in-itself, consciousness separates itself from the world of phenomena to question it and through dissociating itself, it gains its existence. This refers to the self-transcending structure of consciousness that stems from the act of intentionality. Because consciousness is an activity of intending toward things other than itself, it always comes to existence as consciousness of

something. In this sense, for Sartre, intentionality implies a process of negation through which the phenomenal world is disclosed as standing over there. Accordingly, by distinguishing consciousness from being-in-itself, Sartre defines consciousness as nothingness. Since it is deprived of being, which basically means that it is nothing, it is the act of intention without having any established point of reference. By its upsurge that stems from its nothingness, consciousness autonomously and spontaneously introduces its own determinations into the world. In this respect, by characterizing consciousness as nothingness, Sartre attaches importance to anonymous and self-motivated activity of consciousness in which consciousness, on the one hand, defines its essence without taking into consideration anything before itself and, on the other hand, founds its concrete relation to the world. Precisely speaking, all determinations stem from consciousness' spontaneous and autonomous act of intention and consciousness acquires its existence within this activity. On this ground, Sartre affirms that pure intentionality of consciousness assumes a pre-reflective cogito in which consciousness is ever conscious of its self-activation without an ego that unifies it or allows it to act decisively. That is to say, in the pre-reflective level, consciousness is implicitly aware of its act of intention and inwardness, that is, impersonal existence. Actually, Sartre's elucidation of pre-reflective consciousness in terms of inwardness enables him to put forward that the ego is not immanent to consciousness; instead, it is a transcendent object of transparent consciousness. It emerges as a totality of states and actions constructed through consciousness' spontaneous and continual act of nihilation. For him, otherwise, the spontaneity of consciousness would be destroyed because the ego at the center as a unifying agent would bring opacity to the fundamental activity of consciousness, that is, self-determination. Thus, in the pre-reflective level, there is no 'I' which can be conceived as a subject that unifies the acts of consciousness by residing in consciousness, but it appears as an object of reflection when consciousness' attention shifts toward itself. I elaborated on this issue through Sartre's distinction between positional and non-positional consciousness which is illustrated by him with the act of reading. The outcome of this analysis is that the 'I' is produced at the reflected level when non-positional consciousness turns into

positional consciousness. While remembering my reading, I achieve the whole context of reading along with consciousness' non-positional awareness of itself. Hence, the emergence of the 'I' in the reflected awareness of consciousness has its source in non-positional consciousness. In that regard, Sartre points out that absolute consciousness individualizes itself by intending to objects and reflecting on itself. Consciousness in the act of intentionality takes into account the objects in the world as functional, charming, destructive, etc. The self in the act of reflection attributes values and meanings to these qualities. That is to say, through the process of individualization, autonomous consciousness constitutes the ego as a unity of qualities, states, and actions and perceives it as a transcendent object in the world. In reflection, the ego shows up as the concrete entirety of the psychical, namely, the synthesis of the states and actions. What is genuinely primordial is the existence of consciousness as pure intentionality. In this context, Sartre argues that Bergson's theory of consciousness in terms of duration stands for a corrupt spontaneity because Bergson offers freedom by emphasizing the reflected consciousness as a part of the intertwined multiplicity thus neglecting the pre-reflective consciousness as a pre-condition of pure spontaneity. This criticism is important in the sense that, by focusing on the status of ego with respect to consciousness, it marks the first crossroad in my study which introduces a comparison of Bergson and Sartre through the themes of time and freedom.

Before elaborating on Sartre's existentialism in the context of absolute freedom, in the last section of the fourth chapter, I analyzed what it means being-for-Others for consciousness to stress Sartre's method of phenomenology in constructing his existentialism. He principally declares that in the look of the Other, consciousness acquires its being independent of its own constitution. For this reason, the Other's look alienates my nothingness from me. When I am on my own, I exist as grasping my possibilities in the world that I arrange. Yet, when the Other looks at me, she freely determines my being-for-her with respect to her fundamental project. In this sense, for Sartre, this issue comes to the scene with responsibility. Since I seize my factual existence as a flight toward being-in-the-world in the look of the Other, I am

responsible for my being-for-Others. That is to say, as it is a part of my being, I accept responsibility for the Other's constitution of me which is not dependent on me.

In this framework, to formulate the difference between their conceptualization of the relationship between time and freedom and to disclose how Sartre's existentialism emerges as a radical version of Bergson's freedom, in the fifth chapter, I tried to explore Sartre's notion of temporality and its connection to the existentialist sense of absolute freedom. Furthermore, I concentrated on Bergson's theory of evolution and Sartre's idea of the self-world correlation to draw the complete picture of freedom on the account of philosophy of life and existential phenomenology. In line with his fundamental thesis which states that consciousness exists as nothingness, for Sartre, temporality is related to the ontological structure of being-for-itself which refers to consciousness' denial of being identical with itself. This nihilating activity of being-for-itself enables consciousness to unify the three modes of time as a whole while positing a qualitative relationship between them. In this sense, being-for-itself's power of temporalizing produces a heterogeneous synthesis between the past, the present, and the future. He calls this synthesis which is constituted through a negative internal bond as the original temporality to distinguish it from the psychic temporality that refers to Bergson's duration. As it follows from his formulation of the meaning of the past, the present, and the future, Sartre basically notices that being-for-itself grants totality and temporality to being to establish its being-in-the-world. However, psychic temporality involves the already ordered succession of 'nows' rather than the unification of the modes of time formed through being-for-itself's ekstastic nature. In this respect, Sartre affirms that the psychic temporality corresponds to impure reflection in which the self engages with the isolated 'nows'. For him, duration implies this mode of reflection since it is removed from a being which has to be its past and its future in a manner of temporalizing. On the other hand, the original temporality refers to the pure reflection in which the self recognizes itself as an incomplete project by noticing its own nothingness. That is to say, in the mode of pure reflection, by being introduced to its all ekstastes, the for-

itself explores its individuality as an unaccomplished totality. In other words, in the original temporality, the self discovers its possibilities and creates its ego under its unjustifiable and groundless choices. Hence, the self realizes its absolute freedom that serves temporality since the for-itself reproduces its meaning from its future through 'possibilizing' its possibilities. In this context, the existential ground of human being lies in its being a project. A human being determines itself by continually surpassing the situation in the focus of the future. My fundamental project which makes my single projects possible signifies my original choice of myself in which my motives, reasons, values, and goals therefore the sense of my acts are produced. In this light, Sartre defines freedom as an original choice that springs from the act of nihilation, namely, the continuous refusal of instantaneity that gives rise to a continual renewal. It is freedom because the for-itself exists as always having a possibility of assuming its past as an object and performing a new choice of endings on behalf of its fundamental project. Here, the significant aspect of Sartre's existentialism manifests itself. Freedom is not an attribute of consciousness but a being of consciousness in the sense that it is a way in which consciousness exists to constitute its world in correlation to its self.

In the upshot, Sartre's inquiry on temporality under the structure of being-for-itself allows us to figure out how freedom discloses itself as self-determination from the perspective of existential phenomenology. In the last section of the fifth chapter, I tried to demonstrate that the Sartrean concept of self-determination arising from the difference between duration and original temporality is the radicalized portrait of Bergson's self-creation. In doing so, I offered a comparison between Bergson's emphasis on the evolutionary movement of life and Sartre's assertion of the constitution of the world and 'I'. Apart from the self's immanency in a process of becoming, in Sartre's existentialism, freedom means the self-world correlation. By founding consciousness and its temporalizing power in freedom, Sartre rejects the twofold nature of the self and enounces the constitution of the 'I' jointly with its world through consciousness' nihilating activity as self-determination. In its every act, the self chooses itself and projects itself into the world. In this way, the world

gains its meaningful context enclosed with the possibilities of the self. Therefore, for Sartre, the world is out there in its totality because the self rises into the world in its unity constructed through consciousness' practical formation of individual projects by its ekstatic nature. From this perspective, absolute freedom indicates the necessity of self-determination and responsibility rooted in the contingent choices of the self projected into the future. On this ground, I argued that Sartre's freedom is existential because it transforms Bergson's self-creation by correlating the self with the world under the notion of original temporality that accords with the ontological structure of being-for-itself.

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## APPENDICES

### A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Bergson'un yaşam felsefesi ve Sartre'in varoluşçu fenomenolojisinde, özgürlüğün kendiliğindenliğinin, onların niteliksel zaman anlayışları içerisinde kendini yaratma (kendini belirleme) olarak kavramsallaştırılması gerektiğini ortaya koymayı hedeflemektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu tezde, özgür irade ve belirlenimcilik arasındaki geleneksel tartışmanın ötesinde, bu iki filozofun özgürlüğü nasıl formüle ettiklerini göstermek için süre ve zamansallık temelinde onların bilinç ve kendilik nosyonlarını açıklamaya çalıştım. Ayrıca, özgürlük sorgulamasında yaşam felsefesi ve fenomenolojinin farklı tutumlarına ışık tutmak için Sartre'in Bergson eleştirisine vurgu yaparak bu filozofların karşılaştırmalı bir okumasını sundum. Zaman ve özgürlük ilişkisi temelinde ele aldığım Bergson ve Sartre arasındaki bu karşılaştırma, bir yandan bize yaşam ve dünya kavramlarının nasıl farklı yorumlanabileceğine dair ipucu verirken, öte yandan, Bergson'da karşımıza çıkan kendini yaratma fikrinin Sartre'in varoluşçu felsefesinde nasıl kendini belirlemeye dönüştüğünü serimlemektedir.

Bergson'a göre özgürlük, yaşamın akışını da betimleyen, zamanın gerçek doğası olan süre (dureé) ile bağlantılı olarak sahneye çıkar. Dilimize *Şuurun Doğrudan Doğruya Verileri* adıyla çevrilen kitabında Bergson, saf süreyi uzamsal zamandan ayırarak açıklar. Ona göre, mekan analogisi ile kurduğumuz zamanda yani uzamsal zamanda geçmiş, şimdi ve gelecek birbirlerinden kopuk bir halde bir dizi halinde sıralanırlar. Oysa, sürede zamanın bu üç modu birbirlerine nüfuz ederek iç içe geçerler. Bu iç içe geçişi uzaya yansıttığımızda, niteliksel bir devinime sahip olan bu yapıyı çözümleriz ve çözümlerimiz elde ettiğimiz durumları birbiri ardına sıralarız. Bu sebeptendir ki, Bergson'un düşüncesine göre uzamsal zaman homojen bir aracı konumundadır. Homojen zamanda geçmiş, şimdi ve gelecek birbirleriyle dışsal bir ilişki içine

girerler. Bu nedenle, Bergson homojen zamanın statik olduğunu ve neden-sonuç ilişkisine tabi bir şekilde ilerlediğini iddia eder. Ancak, saf süre heterojendir ve içerisinde dinamizm barındırır. Bu dinamizm, geçmişin her an şimdiye katılarak onu dönüştürdüğü ve geleceği kemirdiği bir oluş sürecidir. Süre, bu oluş sürecinde niteliksel değişimlerle ilerledikçe büyür ve büyüdükçe gelişir. Bu bağlamda, Bergson süreyi bir akış olarak ele alır. Saf süre, kendi kendisini yaratarak gelişen bir akıştır, devinimdir.

Süre ve mekansal zaman arasında yaptığı ayrımı güçlendirmek için Bergson, kendi çokluk teorisini öne sürer. Ona göre, niteliksel ve niceliksel olmak üzere iki tür çokluk vardır. Niceliksel çokluk, uzayda yer kaplayan nesnelerin oluşturduğu ve her bir elementin uzayda bir nokta olarak tasvir edilebildiği süreklilik arz etmeyen bir çokluktur. Böyle bir yapıda olan niceliksel çokluk, birimselleştirilerek ölçülebilir, sebep-sonuç ilişkisinde çözümlenebilir ve böylece, bilimsel çalışmalara konu olabilir. Fakat, niteliksel çokluk süredir. Bu çoklukta, birbirleri içine dahil olarak sürekli birbirleriyle kaynaşan, heterojen bir bütünlük oluşturan bilinç halleri bulunur. Bu kaynaşma, uzaya yansıtılmadan sembolleştirilemez ve dolayısıyla nesnelleştirilemez. Burada Bergson'un vurgulamak istediği nokta, bilinç durumlarımızın oluşturduğu çokluğun yani sürenin niceleştirilememesidir. Çünkü, Bergson'a göre, ruhsal durumlarımızı dış dünyada konumlandırarak niceleştirmeye çalıştığımızda, iç dünyamızın niteliksel, organik oluşumunu uzaydaki noktalara indirgeyerek bozarız. Oysa ki, bilinç hallerinin akışının organik bütünlüğünde kesinti ya da ara yoktur. Her bir ruhsal durumumuzun nerede başlayıp nerede bittiğini, hangisinin diğerlerinden belirleyici bir şekilde ayrı olduğunu ve dolayısıyla, hangisinin etkin olarak öne çıktığını söyleyemeyiz. Süre, ilk elden tecrübe edilen, dolayimsız olarak yaşanan gerçek zamandır. Bu aracısız gerçekleşen deneyimde, bilinç halleri daimi bir şekilde birbirleri içine nüfuz ederek her an yeni bir oluşuma girerler. Her yeni oluşum yaratıcıdır çünkü bilinç halleri birbirlerini dönüştüren ve değiştiren kesintisiz bir etkileşim içerisindedirler. İçsel dünyamızda süregelen bu devinim neticesinde, belirli bir andaki algımıza sürekli geçmiş karışır. Geçmiş anlarımız her an şimdiye dahil olur ve onu dönüştürür. Bu süreç tek taraflı değildir

çünkü şimdide yaşadığımız o an geçmişimizi de etkiler ve biçimlendirir. Ayrıca, gelecek beklentilerimiz de bu devinime katılır; geçmişimiz ve şimdiki anımız ile hemhal olarak yaratıcı dinamizme katılır. Bu noktada Bergson, felsefenin zamanı açıklamaya çalışırken düştüğü yanılgıyı gözler önüne serer. Ona göre, felsefe tarihi zamanı mekansal olarak kavradığı için onun gerçek doğasını yakalayamaz. Mekansal zaman tasvirinde, geçmiş, etkisini kaybetmiş şimdiler dizisidir. Gelecek ise, henüz gelmemiş olan şimdilerdir. Bu anlayışa göre, mekanın bölünebilmesi gibi zaman da birbirinden kopuk üniteler halinde ayrılır. Ancak, Bergson'un fikrine göre bu yaklaşım, tamamen nesnel ve bilimseldir. Bu doğrultuda, Bergson, mekansal zamanın, her birimizin kendine özgü, somut olarak deneyimlediği gerçek zamanı yani süreyi açıklamaktan uzak olduğuna işaret eder. Süre, biriciktir. Her birimizin süresi, kendine has iç dinamizmi ile akar ve bu akış, her birimizin kendi iç dünyasını yansıtır. Bu sebeptendir ki süre, yaşanan zamandır.

Bergson, *Metafiziğe Giriş* kitabında süreyi anlama biçimi olan sezgi (intuition) yönteminden bahseder ve bunun karşısına mekanı bilme biçimi olan zekayı koyar. Bergson'un yaşam felsefesinde, sürenin içsel oluşumu, sezgi yöntemi ile anında dolaysız olarak deneyimlenebilen yaratıcı yaşam sürecini ifade eder. Bu nedenle Bergson, sürenin, analizle çalışan zekanın muamelesine tabi olamayacağını savunur. Ona göre, sezgi ediminde sürenin dinamik akışıyla çakışan saf bilinç, mutlak gerçekliği yani süreyi kavrar ve yaşamın akışına katılır. Öte yandan bilinç, zekasıyla hareket ettiğinde bu içsel dinamizmi analitik bir yaklaşımla kesin ve belirli ayrımlara dönüştürür. Bunu yaparken, birbirine içsel bir bağla kaynaşan zihin durumlarını dışsallaştırır ve onları uzaya yansıtır. Dolayısıyla zeka, gerçekliği mekânsal bir kompozisyon içinde kurgulayarak, onu içeriden değil, belirli bir perspektiften algılar. Ne var ki, süreye dahil olarak onu içeriden algılayan bilinç, yaşamın yaratıcı akışını mutlak bir gerçeklik olarak deneyimler. Sezgi yöntemiyle süreyle çakışan bilinç, sürenin heterojen yapısında niteliksel değişimlere neden olan içsel farklılaşmaların, niceliksel çokluğun mekanik düzeninin aksine yaratıcı bir süreci mümkün kıldığını doğrudan tecrübe eder.

Bu doğrultuda, süre ve özgürlük arasındaki ilişkiyi göstermek için Bergson, homojen zaman ve süre arasındaki farka paralel olarak, temel kendilik (moi profond) ve yüzeysel kendilik (moi superficiel) olmak üzere kendiliğin iki yönü olduğunu ileri sürer. Bergson'un derin ya da içsel kendilik olarak da ifade ettiği temel kendilik, süre ile uyum içinde olarak yaşamın akışını anında deneyimler ve kendini yaratma sürecinde kendini keşfeder. Yüzeysel yani dışsal kendilik ise, sosyal ve pratik gereksinimleri sebebiyle uzamsal zamana ait olarak varolur ve zekası aracılığıyla sosyal yaşam ile iletişim halinde olur. Başka bir deyişle, iç içe geçmiş bilinç durumlarının somut bütünlüğünde bulunduğu için, derin kendilik içsel yaşamımızı temsil eder. Öte yandan, yüzeysel kendilik, sosyal hayatın yükümlülükleri uğruna dış dünyanın bir bileşeni olarak tasarlanan dış tarafımızı ifade eder. Bu açıdan, Bergson'un düşüncesinde yüzeysel kendilik, içteki beni örten bir kabuk gibidir. Bu kabuk, kavramların, dilin ve sosyal dünyanın sınırlamaları altında içsel kendiliğin biçimlendirilmiş versiyonuna karşılık gelir. Bu bağlamda, Bergson, özgürlük meselesinin yüzeysel kendilik ve homojen zaman temelinde sorgulanması nedeniyle özgür irade ve belirlenimcilik argümanlarına indirgendiğini iddia eder. Bununla birlikte, nedensellik, olumsuzluk ve öngörü ilkesine bağlı olan liberter veya determinist görüşlerin ötesinde, özgürlüğün gerçek doğasının, yaşamın süreye içkin olan dinamizmini deneyimleyen derin kendilikte kendini gösterdiğini savunur. Determinizmin tüm savunucuları ve karşıtları zamanı, geçmişin, şimdinin ve geleceğin neden-sonuç ilişkileriyle birbirine bağlı olduğu homojen bir varlık olarak görür. Bu teorilerde süre ihmal edildiğinden, kendilik, birbirinden kopuk bilinç durumlarının bir toplamı olarak kavramsallaştırılır. Bu nedenle, kendiliğin edimleri, özgür eylemin kaynaklandığı süreden bağımsız olarak kesin ve belirli ayrımlarla sembolize edilir.

Bergson'da özgürlük, kendini yaratma sürecidir ve özgür edim yaratıcı bir dinamizimden yani süreden kaynaklanır. Bu bağlamda, yaratıcılık Bergson'un felsefesinde özgürlüğün temel bir ilkesidir. Derin kendilik eylemlerini özgürce gerçekleştirdiğinde, ruhsal durumlarının kendiliğinden iç içe geçmesiyle oluşan sürenin içsel büyümesinde yer alır. Bu süreç geçmişin, şimdinin ve geleceğin uyumlu

bir karışımını içerdiğinden, derindeki kendiliğin eylemi, gelecekteki eylemlerinin arkasında yatmaz; onun tüm kişiliğini yaratır. Bu nedenle, sürekli bir oluş halinde, süreden doğan özgür eylemleriyle birlikte, kendilik var olduğu sürece gelişir. Burada söz konusu olan, kendi kendine evrimleşen bir süreç olarak sürenin, özgürlüğün doğuşunu temsil ettiği gerçeğidir. Süre, tamamlanmamış, geri döndürülemez ve öngörülemeyen somut bir gerçeklik deneyimi olduğu için, kendiliğin her eylemi niteliksel olarak diğerinden ayrılır. Sürenin her anı, yeni bir oluşum olduğu için, kendilik özgür eylemlerinde gelişir.

Bergson'un ifade ettiği gibi özgürlük kendi kendini yaratmak anlamına geliyorsa, o zaman mutlak olamaz; özgürlüğün dereceleri vardır. Yaratım, yalnızca, içinde kendisine özgü istençlerinin ve güdülerinin barındığı içsel yaşamıyla örtüşen temel kendilikte gerçekleşebilir. Bu çakışmadan doğan eylemler, sosyal ve pratik dünyada meydana gelen sebep-sonuç ilişkilerini ortadan kaldırır. Bu bağlamda, Bergson, kendimizi bilincimizin derinliklerindeki saf süreye yani yaşamın akışına ne kadar geri çekersek, yapay bölmelere bağlı dış dünyadan arınmış mutlak bir gerçeklik olarak özgürlüğümüzü o kadar çok sezebileceğimizi savunur. Böylece, yaşamın akışı içinde barınan kendiliğin somut ve dolaysız deneyimine odaklanan Bergson felsefesinde dünya, sürenin oluş halini kırması bakımından nesnelleşmeyi ve kavramsallaşmayı ifade eder. Pratik dünyanın bir gereği olarak kendilik, uzaya yansıtıldığında toplumsal yaşamın kişisel olmayan bir parçası haline gelir. Bu nedenle, eylemlerinin ve seçimlerinin önceden belirlenmiş bir düzene bağlı olduğu bir dünyada kendisini bulur. Bu noktadan hareketle Bergson'un felsefesi, süre ve derin kendilik üzerinden özgürlüğü sorgularken, Sartre'in eleştirisine maruz kalacak kritik noktaları ortaya çıkarır: sürenin yapısı, kendiliğin bilince içkinliği ve mutlak olmayan özgürlük.

*Yaratıcı Tekamül*'de Bergson'un evrim fikri ile yaşamı incelemesi, özgürlük ve süre arasındaki bağlantıyı ortaya çıkarır. Böylece, onun süre kavramı bize sadece bir zaman teorisi sunmakla kalmaz; aynı zamanda yaşamın, dinamizme ve yaratıcılığa işaret eden özünü de serimler. Bu açıdan bakıldığında Bergson, süreyi evrenin zamanı olarak da ele alır. Bergson'a göre yaşamak, sürekli bir oluş sürecine; yani,

daimi bir yaratım olarak kendini ifşa eden yaşamın özüne katılmak demektir. Bu yaratıcı süreçte, evrim, orijinal itici gücün, yaşam atılımının (élan vital) önceden belirlenmiş bir düzeni veya bir hedefi olmaksızın bölünerek kendisini çeşitli biçimlerde gerçekleştirdiği nitel değişimleri ifade eder. Bu hareket özgürlüktür çünkü bir akış olan yaşam, tekrara düşmeden veya bir amaç belirlemeden her defasında yeniyi yaratmak için özgürce hareket eder. Yaşam atılımı, bir ilk atılımdan gelerek bütün yaşam gelişimini baştan sona kateden bir hamledir. Bu bağlamda Bergson'a göre sezgiyi kullanarak yaşamın en somut gerçeğinin içsel yaratıcılık olduğunu doğrudan yakalarız çünkü evren de bilincimiz gibi sürede varolur. Buna paralel olarak, Bergson, zekayı varsayan mekanik anlayışın, olanı şimdiki zamandan ibaretmiş gibi değerlendirdiği için yaşamın gerçek doğasını, dolayısıyla evrimi aydınlatmakta başarısız olduğunu savunur. Bu sebeptendir ki, finalistik ve mekanistik teoriler evrimi açıklamakta yetersiz kalırlar. Süreyi yani akışı hesaba katmayan bu yaklaşımlar, türler arasındaki ardışıklığı saf bir görünüme indirgerler ve nihayetinde evrimi, önceden belirlenmiş bir programın işlemesi veya belirli bir ereğin yerine getirilmesi üzerinden tanımlamaya çalışırlar. Oysa ki, Bergson'un yaratıcı evrim fikri, alternatif büyüme yolları ile yayılan orijinal bir itici güce sahip olması bakımından bu görüşlerden farklıdır. Evrimsel hareket, yaşam atılımının sürede kendisini gerçekleştirmesidir. Bu oluş sürecinde, yaşam dürtüsü tüm yaşam formlarına içkin hale gelir. Bu harekete katılan bilinç de yaratma süreci ile örtüşür ve kendiliğın eylemleri bu yaşam akışından doğduğu müddetçe özgürdür. Sonuç olarak, Bergson'un düşüncesinde, bilincin akışı, yaşamın yaratıcı gücü ile birdir.

20. yüzyıl felsefesinin önde gelen isimlerinden biri olan Bergson'un süreye yaptığı vurgu, Sartre'ın fenomenolojiye dayandırdığı varoluşçu felsefesini etkilemiştir. Dünyaya mekaniklik atfederek, metodolojilerinde niceliği ve evrenselliği dikkate alan görüşlerin aksine, Sartre, Bergson gibi, insan varoluşunun teorik bakış açısını önceleyen niteliksel yönlerine odaklanarak biricikliğe ve tekilliğe önem verir. Bu bağlamda, mutlak özgürlüğün varoluşsal anlamını ortaya çıkarmak için Sartre, orijinal zamana, yani zamansallığa felsefesinde önemli bir yer ayırır. Bergson'un düşüncesine uygun olarak, Sartre'ın özgürlük kavramı, zamanın üç boyutunun

heterojen bütünlüğü içinde kendiliğin kendisini gerçekleştirdiği orijinal zamansallığı varsayar. Fakat, Bergson'un yaşamın yaratıcı gücünü öne çıkaran özgürlük yorumundan farklı olarak, Sartre özgürlüğü, bir hiçlik olan bilincin olumsuzlayıcı faaliyetinin ve dolayısıyla benim ve dünyanın kurulmasının kökü olarak görür. Daha açık bir ifade ile, Sartre'ın düşüncesinde özgürlük, bilincin zamansallaştırıcı gücü altında dünyada kurulur. Bu noktadan hareketle, Sartre'ın fenomenolojik ontolojisi, dünya-içinde-olmaklığın yapısını inceleyerek, anlamını orijinal zamansallık ile kazanan mutlak özgürlüğü açıklamaya odaklanır. Yukarıda değindiğim gibi, ortak noktalarda buluşan bu iki filozof, bilinç ve kendilik arasındaki ilişki, zamansallık ve süre arasındaki ayrım gibi meselelerde farklılaşarak özgürlüğü sorgularlar.

Mutlak özgürlüğe giden yolda, *Varlık ve Hiçlik*, *Egonun Aşknlığı* ışığında Sartre'ın fenomenolojik ontolojisini anlamak onun Bergson üzerine yaptığı eleştiriye ve zamansallık hakkındaki görüşlerini kavramamız için bize yol gösterir. Varlığı fenomenolojik bir yaklaşımla inceleyen Sartre, bilincin kendi-için-varlık (*être-pour-soi*) kipinde var olduğunu ve bu temelde kendinde-varlıktan (*être-en-soi*) farklı olduğunu keşfeder. Kendinde-varlığın kendisi ile özdeş ve kendine kendine yeterli doğasına karşı, kendi-için-varlık, her zaman kendisinden ayrı olarak var olur. Tamamlanmamış bir varlık kipi olarak bilinç, kendisi ile çakışma uğruna daima kendini belirleme mücadelesi içindedir. Sartre'a göre, bilinç, deneyimde dünya ile ilişki kurarak varlığını ödünç alır. Dünyadaki nesnelere, yani kendinde-varlığın aksine, bilinç şeyleri sorgulamak için kendisini fenomenler dünyasından ayırır ve bu ayrılışla varoluşunu kazanır. Sartre'da bu, bilincin yönelimsellik faaliyeti ile kendini aşan yapısına işaret eder. Bilinç, kendisinden başka şeylere yönelme eylemi olduğu için, her zaman bir şeyin bilinci olarak var olur. Bu anlamda, Sartre'a göre yönelimsellik, sonunda fenomenal dünyanın açmlandığı, bilincin bir olumsuzlama sürecidir. Hiçliğinden kaynaklanan yükselişle bilinç, kendi belirlemelerini özerk ve kendiliğinden bir şekilde dünyaya getirir. Bu bağlamda Sartre, bilinci hiçlik olarak nitelendirerek, bilincin bir yandan kendinden önceki hiçbir şeyi dikkate almadan özünü tanımladığını, diğer yandan da bu özünü anonim ve kendinden güdümlü bir şekilde dünya ile somut ilişki içinde oluşturduğunu iddia eder. Daha net bir ifade ile,

tüm belirlenimler, bilincin kendiliğinden ve özerk olan yönelimselliğinden doğar, ve bilinç, varlığını bu etkinlik içinde kazanır.

Sartre, bilincin saf yönelimselliğini, bilinci birliğe getiren ya da onun edimine izin veren bir ego olmaksızın refleksiyon öncesi faaliyeti ile açıklar. Ona göre, refleksiyon öncesi düzeyde bilinç, kendi kendisini etkinleştirdiğinin farkındadır. Başka bir deyişle, bu düzeyde bilinç, yönelimselliğinin ve saf içselliğinin, yani bir ego içermeyen varoluşunun bilincindedir. Bu anlamda, Sartre'ın refleksiyon öncesi bilinci içe dönüklük olarak tanımlaması, onun egonun bilince içkin olmadığını öne sürmesini sağlar. Ego bilincin içinde ya da gerisinde bir yerde değildir; o şeffaf bilincin aşkın bir nesnesidir. Bu demektir ki, ego bilincin kendiliğinden ve hiçleyerek kurduğu durumlar ve eylemler bütünü olarak ortaya çıkar. Aksi takdirde, Sartre'a göre, birleştirici bir fail olarak ego bilincin merkezinde olsaydı, onun temel etkinliğine, yani kendi kendisini belirlemesine bulanıklık getirerek bilincin kendiliğindenliğini yok ederdi. Bu nedenle Sartre, refleksiyon öncesi düzeyde bilincin saf yönelimsellik olduğunu; fakat, bilincin dikkatinin kendisine doğru kayması sonucu bir refleksiyon nesnesi olarak 'ben'in ortaya çıktığını iddia eder. Dolayısıyla Sartre, mutlak bilincin, nesnelere yönelerek ve kendi üzerine düşünerek kendini bireyselleştirdiğine işaret eder. Yönelim eyleminde bilinç, dünyadaki nesnelere işlevsel, çekici, yıkıcı vb. olarak dikkate alır. Düşünme eylemindeki kendilik ise bu niteliklere değerler ve anlamlar yükler. Refleksiyonda ego, psikik olanın somut bütünlüğü, yani durumların ve eylemlerin bir sentezi olarak sahneye çıkar. Gerçekten orijinal olan, bilincin saf yönelimsellik olarak varolmasıdır. Bu bağlamda Sartre, Bergson'un süre ile açıkladığı bilinç teorisinin yozlaşmış bir kendiliğindenliği temsil ettiğini savunur. Çünkü, ona göre Bergson, bilinci refleksiyon düzeyinde iç içe geçmiş çokluğun bir parçası olarak tanımlar. Dolayısıyla, özgürlüğü, saf bilincin bir ön koşulu olan refleksiyon öncesi düzeyi ihmal ederek sürede yani ego merkezli bilinçte temellendirir. Bu eleştiri, egonun bilince göre statüsüne odaklandığı için Bergson'un ve Sartre'ın zaman ve özgürlük temaları üzerinden karşılaştırmasına ışık tutar.

Bilincin ön-düşünümsel (refleksiyon öncesi) farkındalığına ve refleksiyonda 'Ben'in ortaya çıkışına yaptığım vurgu, Sartre'ın yönelimsellik fikrini, bilincin, nesnelere dünyası ve ego ile ilişkisi içinde formüle etmemize imkan verir. Bununla birlikte, Sartre'ın başkaları-için-varlığı kendi-için-varlığın bir boyutu, yani kendi-içinin dolaysız bir yapısı olarak tanımlaması, bilincin dünyada öteki ile karşılaşarak kendini kavramasını açığa çıkarır. Bu açıdan, özgürlük sorununa değinmeden önce, bilincin başkaları-için-varlığı, Sartre'ın varoluşçu fenomenolojisini daha yakından tanımamızı sağlar. Sartre, başkaları için-varlığın anlamını açıklamak için *Varlık ve Hiçlik*'in üçüncü bölümünde, kendi-için'in Öteki ile ilişkisinin öteki tarafından bakılarak açığa çıktığı 'bakma' ve 'utanç' deneyimlerine odaklanır ve bu deneyimleri örnekler. Parkta yürürken, tüm unsurlarıyla park, bilincimin yönelimsel edimiyle kurulur. Bu faaliyette, refleksiyon öncei düzeyde parkı deneyimlerim ve bilincim parktaki nesnelere bilincindedir. Ne var ki, parkta birini gördüğümde, onun parktaki nesnelere farklı olduğunu bildiğimden bu kişi bilincimin hem nesnesi hem de öznesi olur. Bu özel nesne, yani Öteki, parktaki nesnelere kendi dikkatine göre düzenleyen bir öznedir. Böylece, Öteki'nin mevcudiyeti ile, benden başka bilinç olan birinin de, kendi bilincinin yönelimiyle parkı kendisi için oluşturabileceğini anlarım. Dahası, Öteki, bilinç olduğu için beni de bir nesne olarak kurar. Başka bir deyişle, onu görmem, onu hali hazırda konumlandığı gibi onun da beni bir nesne olarak konumlandırabileceğini gösterir. Bu nokta yani Öteki tarafından bakılmak, başkaları için-varlığın anlamını netleştirmek için önemlidir. Sartre'ın kapı deliğinden bir odayı gözetleyen kişinin koridorda ayak sesleri duyduğunda hissettiği utanç duygusu ile betimlediği üzere, Öteki'nin bakışı özgürlüğüm için bir tehlike haline gelir. Bu durum, benim başkaları için-varlığımın açığa çıkma şeklidir. Bakıştan önce yani yalnızken ben biri değilimdir; daha doğrusu kendimden hiçlikle ayrılırım. Ancak, bana bakıldığı zaman, kendi belirlememe bağlı olmayan bir varlık elde ederim ve bir kişi olurum. Öteki, kendi-için-varlık olduğu için, eylemlerime istediği bir değeri veya anlamı atfedebilir. Bu noktada Sartre, başkaları için-varlığımın benim yaratmam olmadığını; yine de, varlığımın bir bileşenini açıkça ima ettiği için bu yaratımın sorumluluğunu kabul etmem gerektiğini ileri sürer. Böylece, Öteki'nin ortaya çıkışı, dünya-içinde-varlığa doğru bir kaçış olarak gerçek varoluşumu

kavramam anlamında beni sorumlu kılar. Bu demektir ki, başkaları-için-varlığımdan sorumluyumdur.

Bu çalışmanın son bölümünde, Sartre'ın fenomenolojik ontolojisini sunduktan sonra, Bergson ve Sartre felsefelerinin zaman ve özgürlük arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl formüle ettiklerini ve Sartre'ın varoluşçuluğunun Bergson'cu özgürlüğün radikal bir versiyonu olarak nasıl belirlediğini göstermek için orijinal zamansallık kavramı ve mutlak özgürlük arasındaki bağıntıyı irdedim. Ayrıca, yaşam felsefesi ve varoluşsal fenomenoloji açısından özgürlüğün portresini çizmek için Bergson'un evrim teorisine atıfta bulunarak Sartre'ın ben ve dünya korelasyonu fikrine odaklandım. Sartre'a göre, bilincin hiçlik olarak var olduğunu belirten temel tezi doğrultusunda zamansallık, bilincin kendisiyle özdeş olmayı reddedişini serimleyen kendi-için-varlığın ontolojik yapısıyla ilişkilidir. Kendi-için-varlığın bu hiçleştirici etkinliği, bilincin üç zaman kipi arasında niteliksel bir ilişki ortaya koymasını sağlar. Bu anlamda bilincin zamansallaştırma gücü geçmiş, şimdi ve gelecek arasında heterojen bir sentez üretir. Sartre, negatif bir içsel bağ aracılığıyla oluşturulan bu sentezi, Bergson'un süresini betimleyen psişik zamansallıktan ayırt etmek için orijinal zamansallık olarak adlandırır. Bu doğrultuda, Sartre, geçmişin, şimdinin ve geleceğin bilinç için ne anlama geldiğini tek tek açıkladıktan sonra, kendi-için-varlığın yani bilincin, kendi dünya-içinde-varlığını kurmak için varlığa bütünlük ve zamansallık bahşettiğini öne sürer. Ancak, ona göre, psişik zamansallık, kendi-için-varlığın doğası aracılığıyla biçimlenen zaman modlarının birleşmesinden ziyade, "şimdi"lerin hali hazırda organize olmuş ardışıklığını içerir. Bu açıdan Sartre, psişik zamansallığın, kendiliğin izole edilmiş "şimdi"lerle meşgul olduğu saf olmayan refleksiyona tekabül ettiğini düşünür. Ona göre süre, zamanlaştırma gücü ile geçmiş ve geleceği sentezleyen bir varlıktan, yani kendi-için-varlıktan yoksun olduğu için orijinal zamansallık değildir. Öte yandan, orijinal zamansallık, kendiliğin kendi hiçliğini fark ederek kendisini tamamlanmamış bir proje olarak tanıdığı saf refleksiyonu ifade eder. Başka bir deyişle, orijinal zamansallıkta kendilik olanaklarını keşfeder ve bir temele dayanmayan, gerekçesi olmayan seçimleri ile egosunu yaratır. Bu demektir ki, orijinal zamansallığın üretimi olan saf refleksiyonda

kendilik, tamamlanmamış bir bütün olan bireyselliğinin farkına varır. Dolayısıyla, kendi-için-varlık, olanaklarını mümkün kılarak kendi anlamını geleceğinden yeniden üretir. Bunu yaparken, mutlak özgürlüğünü zamansallığında keşfeder. Bu bağlamda, insanın varoluşsal zemini, onun bir proje olmasında yatar. İnsan, geleceğinin odağında sürekli olarak içinde bulunduğu durumu aşarak kendini belirler. Sartre'a göre, tekil projelerimi mümkün kılan temel projem, içinde motivasyonlarımın, değerlerimin, hedeflerimin ve bu minvalde eylemlerimin anlamlarının üretildiği, kendi özgün seçimimi ifade eder. Böylece Sartre, özgürlüğü, bilincin hiçleme eyleminden kaynaklanan özgün bir seçim olarak tanımlar. Bu seçim, daimi bir yenilenmedir çünkü, bilinç sürekli olarak anda olmayı reddeder. Sartre'ın düşüncesinde bu özgürlüktür, çünkü kendi-için-varlık, her zaman geçmişini üstlenerek ve temel projesi adına yeni bir seçimi gerçekleştirme olanağına sahip olarak var olur.

Bergson'un felsefesinde özgürlüğün temelinde süre yer alır. Fakat, Sartre özgürlüğü, bilincin zamansallaştırıcı gücünün kaynağı olarak görür. Sartre'ın bakış açısına göre, bilincin hiçlik olduğunu iddia etmek, bilincin varoluşunun özünde mutlak özgürlük olduğunu söylemekle eş anlamlıdır. Bergson'un anlayışında, bilinç olarak süre, kendiliğin ve onun zihinsel durumlarının birlikte geliştiği yaratıcı bir bütündür. Yani ego, durumların ve eylemlerin ayrılmaz bir bütünü olarak bilince verilir. Sürede her anın organik bütünü temsil etmesi gibi, kendilik de somut bir bütünlük olarak her durumda veya eylemde ortaya çıkar. Ancak, Sartre, Bergson'un, özgürlüğü süre kavramı altında ele almasından dolayı, onun bir olumsuzlama olmasını yok saydığını ve zamanın gücünü gölgede bıraktığını iddia eder. Ne var ki, Sartre'a göre özgürlük, bu gücü aydınlatmak için kendi-için-varlığın ilkel olumsuzluğu olarak görülmelidir. Dolayısıyla Sartre'da, zamanın kaynağı özgürlüktedir ama tersi değildir. Bergson'un ve Sartre'ın özgürlük anlayışları arasındaki farkın açıldığı kritik nokta burasıdır. Sartre, bu bakış açısıyla Bergson eleştirerek mutlak özgürlük fikrini geliştirir ve Bergson'un kendi kendini yaratma kavramını kendi kendini belirleme olarak radikalleştirir.

Bu çerçevede Sartre, Bergson'un süreyi kendisi-için-varlık olan bilinçten farklı olarak psikolojik bir bilince yerleştirdiğini öne sürer. Ona göre, Bergson'un süresi bilincin hiçliğini öngörmediği için, yani süre olarak bilinç bir eksiklik olmadığı için, geçmişin geriden gelip bugüne nüfuz etmesi mümkün değildir. Aslında, Sartre'ın zamansallığın bir süreklilik olduğunu reddetmesinin; buna karşılık, zamansallığın sürekli olarak varlığa musallat olan hiçlikten doğduğunu ileri sürmesinin nedeni budur. Başka bir deyişle, varlığımın geçmişle özdeşleşmemesinin nedeni, sürekli bir akış olmam değil, bilincimin sürekli bir kaçış olmasıdır, çünkü bilincim hiçlik tarafından kendinden ayrılmıştır. Bergson'un, süreyi homojen zamandan ayırarak bilinç ve özgürlüğü açıklamak için radikal bir yaklaşım benimsediği ifade edilebilir. Bundan ziyade, Sartre'ın sorunsallaştırdığı nokta, mutlak özgürlüğü içinde kendi-için-varlığın varoluşudur. Sartre'ın fenomenolojik bir perspektiften yaptığı süre eleştirisi, onu, kendi kaderini tayin anlamında varoluşsal özgürlükle bağdaşan orijinal zamansallığı ortaya koymaya yönlendirir. Burada söz konusu olan, Sartre'ın bilinç kuramından doğan yaşam felsefesi ile varoluşsal fenomenoloji arasındaki farktır. Sartre, Bergson yorumunda, bilinci hiçlik olarak tanımlayarak yaşamın akışını ve sürenin sürekliliğini reddeder. Bununla birlikte, Bergson, özü sürekli akış olan süreyi bilinçle ve bilince içkin olan egoyla özdeşleştirerek, özgürlüğü yaşamın yaratıcı gücü olarak tasvir eder. Bergson'un yaşam felsefesinde, evrim teorisi ile birlikte, evrenin zamanı olarak süre, ontolojik bir statü kazanır. Bu açıdan süre, Sartre'ın dünya-içinde-olmaklığı araştıran fenomenolojik felsefesinden farklı olarak, kendiliğin hayatın akışı içinde var olmasının anlamını verir.

Bergson'un, özgürlüğün gerçek doğasını, yaşamın yaratıcılığıyla özdeş olan oluş süreci üzerinden ifşa etme girişimine karşı Sartre, radikal özgürlüğü öne sürmek için dünya kavramını ön plana çıkarır. Bu bağlamda, içsel zaman ya da derin kendilik kavramlarından ayrı olarak, Sartre'ın felsefesi boyunca işleyen ana tema, fenomenolojik bir perspektiften Ben'in ve dünyanın kuruluşudur. Sartre, mutlak özgürlük kavramıyla, Bergson'un süre ile uzamsal zaman, yani içsel kendilik ve yüzeysel kendilik arasındaki ayırmadan doğan dereceli özgürlük nosyonunu aşmaya çalışır. Başka bir deyişle, Sartre, bilinci ve zamansallığı özgürlükte temellendirerek,

kendiliğin biri yaşamda süren, diğeri dünyayada olan olmak üzere iki yöne ayrılmadığını ortaya koyar; daha ziyade ona göre kendilik, bilincin yönelimselliği sayesinde dünyası ile birlikte kurulur. Sartre'da radikal özgürlük, kendiliğin, olumsal seçimler yoluyla dünyayla bağıntılı olarak bilinç tarafından inşa edilmesi anlamında varoluşsal bir imaya sahiptir. Bu bağlamda, Bergson'un, yaşamın yaratıcı akışına paralel olarak kendini yaratma olarak nitelediği özgürlük anlayışı, Sartre'in yaklaşımında kendini belirleme kavramına dönüşür. Bu dönüşüm, varoluşçu fenomenolojinin özgürlük bağlamında yaşam felsefesinden nasıl farklılaştığını göstermesi açısından önemlidir.

Sartre'in, varoluşun özden önce geldiğini öne süren varoluşçuluk tanımı, onun ben ve dünyam, kendini belirleme gibi kavramlarını radikal özgürlük teması altında bir araya getirir. *Varoluşçuluk Hümanizmdir*'de Sartre, kendi-için-varlığa içkin hiçbir şey olmadığı için insana içkin bir öz de olmadığını ileri sürer. Ona göre, her şeyden önce, bir insan tamamen var olur. Dünyayla meşgul olarak kendisiyle yüzleştikten sonra, kendini seçer ve kendini tanımlar. Kendini belirlemekte olan insan, mutlak özgürlüğünün yanı sıra tam bir sorumluluk içindedir, çünkü onun özgür eylemleri, bir irade tarafından kurulmamıştır. İnsan, özgürlüğü ile özünü yaratmaya mahkumdur.

Sonuç olarak, Sartre'da, bir oluş sürecindeki kendiliğin bilince içkin olarak kendini yaratmasından ziyade özgürlük, kendilik ve dünya korelasyonu anlamına gelir. Sartre, bilincin zamansallaştırıcı gücünü özgürlükte temellendirerek, kendiliğin ikili doğasını reddeder ve kendiliğin kendini belirleme olarak dünyada kurulduğunu savunur. Bilincin yönelimsel edimi ile birlikte kendilik, her eyleminde kendini seçer ve kendini dünyaya yansıtır. Bu şekilde dünya, kendiliğin olanaklarıyla çevrili olarak anlamını kazanır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, mutlak özgürlük, kendini gerçekleştirmenin gerekliliğini ve geleceğe yansıtılan kendiliğin olası seçimlerindeki sorumluluğu ifade eder. Sartre felsefesinde özgürlük, varoluşsal bir karakter kazanır. Kendi-için-varlığın ontolojik yapısıyla uyumlu olan orijinal zamansallık kavramı altında Sartre, kendiliği dünyayla ilişkilendirerek Bergson'un, süre, yaşam ve evrimle bağdaşan kendini yaratma fikrini kendini belirleme olarak dönüştürür.

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